

Time for Stock Taking

Whither Sangh Parivar?

Compiled and Edited by

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VOICE OF INDIA

New Delhi

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Published by Voice of India,
2/18 Ansari Road, New Delhi - 110002

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Introduction

The credit for the present compilation goes wholly to Dr. Shreerang Godbole. It was his letters written to us in August-September 1996 which prompted us to circulate in October 1996 an 8-page brochure - Time For Stock Taking: A Swayamsevak Speaks - which we reproduce below:

Dr. Shreerang Godbole is a young medical practitioner at Pune in Maharashtra. He has been a swayamsevak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for seventeen years. We have received from him the two documents which we are reproducing in the pages that follow. He has given us permission to circulate them widely among the Hindu intelligentsia with a view to elicit Hindu response.

1. *The first document carries his comments on eight formulations which have been popularized by the Sangh Parivar in recent years. These were presented by him to a Seminar held at Pune on 27-28 July 1996 under the aegis of Prajna Bharati in order to review the political scene in India after the 1996 Lok Sabha Elections and the fall of the first BJP government at the Centre. Participants in the Seminar included Sarvashri K.S. Sudarshan, Murlī Manohar Joshi, Dattopant Thengdi, K.R. Malkani, S. Gurumurthy, Devendra Swarup, Muzaffar Hussain, P. Parameswaran, and M.G. Vaidya, among others.*
2. *The second document is a letter which he wrote on 8 August, 1996 to Shri K. S. Sudarshan, Joint Secretary of the RSS, regarding Sarva Panth Samādar Manch (a platform for extending equal honour to all ways of worship) floated some time ago by the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) which works in the labour field under RSS inspiration. The moving spirit of the Manch is Shri Dattopant Thengdi, though it is presided over by a Parsi gentleman from Nagpur.*

The two documents speak for themselves. We invite Hindus in general and members of the Sangh Parivar in particular to respond to the issues which Dr. Godbole has raised. VOICE OF INDIA will welcome all responses, and publish them in due course so that leaders of the Sangh Parivar may know how the Hindu intelligentsia view the latest Sangh slogans and strategies.¹

II

We have only two brief comments to offer:

1. A study of Hindu-Muslim relations since the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 tells us that Muslims have been making demands - ideological, political, territorial - and Hindu conceding them all along. Yet the Muslim problem remains with us in as acute a form as ever. With the advent of petro-dollars and the emergence of V.P. Singh, Laloo Prasad, Mulayam Singh and Kanshi Ram on the political scene, Muslims have become as aggressive and intransigent as in the pre-Partition period.
2. It has become a habit with Hindu leaders to take Hindus for granted and bargain with Muslims on the latter's terms. Leaders of the Indian National Congress have taken Hindus

¹ Responses should be typed, and not hand-written. Anonymous responses will not be considered.

for granted from 1885 till today. Now leaders of the Sangh Parivar look like following the same path. Hindus have to decide as to how long they are going to be taken for granted.

VOICE OF INDIA

New Delhi

16 October, 1996

First Document

Attitude of Hindu Organisations towards Muslim Problem:

Comments offered by Dr. Godbole at the Pune Seminar

With the rising Hindu resurgence, the policy of Hindu organizations towards Muslim problem is receiving attention. However, the statements of certain Hindu leaders make one feel that there is fundamental ideological confusion among Hindu leaders vis-à-vis Muslims. These statements, particularly as they come from respected Hindu leaders, create and perpetuate misconceptions among Hindu masses about true nature of Islam. Let us examine a few of these misconceptions.

1. *What is the harm in adding Jesus and Muhammad to the 33 crore Hindu gods and goddesses?*

Semitic religions like Islam and Christianity look upon Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets (Last Prophet) and Jesus as God's only Begotten Son respectively. They reject all other gods except Allah and God [of the Bible] respectively. When Muhammad himself started rejecting other pre-Islamic Arab goddesses like Al-Manat, the pre-Islamic Arabs (Quraiysh) tried to bring the Prophet to a compromise, offering to accept his religion if he would so modify it as to make room for their gods as intercessors with Allah, offering to make him their King, if he would give up attacking idolatry (The Holy Quran, English translation by Marmaduke Pickthall, p.6). Prophet Muhammad rejected all pleas of the Quraiysh and destroyed all idols and pictures existing then in the Ka'aba. The real question is whether Islam allows addition of any God other than Allah, not whether Hindus are willing to include Muhammad or Allah.

2. *All religions (including Islam) lead to God.*

Some Hindus think that it is against Hinduism to criticize other religions. The openness of Hinduism should not be used to sanction the dogmas of other religious groups, though it does not prevent us from respecting the Truth in whatever form we encounter it. If we are seeking to climb a mountain, several routes are possible but not all are equally valid.

Moreover, following a path that leads away from the mountain will never take us to the top, whatever that path may be called. Spiritual practices are like different vehicles. Some are like airplanes, some are like bullock carts. While all may take us somewhere, they are hardly all on the same level, or all equally recommended for travel (David Frawley alias Vamadeva Shastri, Arise Arjuna, Voice of India, p.6).

3. Islam is good but Muslims are bad.

The fact is quite the reverse. Muslims minus their Islam are as good or bad as any other human beings, The pre-Islamic Arabs and Turks were tolerant people, It was Islam that brutalized them, If Muslims renounce Islam, they will also become tolerant.

4. If Muslims are told of their common ancestry, they will unite with Hindus.

How foolish! As if Muslims are not aware that their forefathers were converted to Islam. However, for Muslims, pre-Islamic period is a period of darkness (*jāhiliya*). Prophet Muhammad is himself reported to have said that his mother and beloved uncle were sent to Hell because they were non-Muslims.

5. Congress used Muslims. Congress treats Muslims as vote banks. We (BJP) will treat Muslims as human beings.

The fact is again quite the reverse. It is not Congress that used Muslims but Muslims that used the Congress to achieve their political purposes. As long as Congress was powerful, Muslims voted for it. Now that it has become weak, Muslims have dropped it and opted for Third Front. Also, Muslims view themselves as a vote bank. In recent elections they did tactical voting to keep BJP out of power. It is not important how BJP views Muslims but how Muslims view BJP. For Muslims, BJP leaders are Kafirs and will be cut up if Muslims seize power.

6. Sufis are tolerant Muslims.

In fact, Sufis were the most fanatic of Muslims. Shah Waliullah who raised the cry of Pan-Islamism in recent times was a Sufi. Eaton's Sufis of Bijapur has been banned by our Government because it exposes the fanaticism of Sufis.

7. Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims.

It is not Muslim leaders but Islamic theology that is responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims. Page after page of Quran and Hadis tell Muslims how they are superior to the Kafirs, how Kafirs are impure, and how one should not make friends with them. The Hadis even tells Muslims to build houses only in those places from where even smoke coming from the house of a Kafir will not be seen! Is it then any wonder that Muslims live in ghettos?

8. Namaaz offered on a disputed site (like Ayodhya) is not acceptable to Allah.

This is plain nonsense. Nowhere is any such thing said in Quran and Hadis. In fact, both books repeatedly exhort Muslims to destroy idols of other religions.

Let us read Quran, Hadis, Sunnah (Life of Prophet). Then we will realize that to assimilate Muslims into BJP/RSS is like assimilating Marxists into BJP/RSS. Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Marxism, Nazism all believe in One God, One Prophet, One Book, One History, They are exclusivist ideologies and reject all accommodation and assimilation. It is only when Muslims are cured of Islam that they can be assimilated. Muslims should in fact be viewed as victims of Islam. Every effort should be made to expose Islam. Like Marxism, Islam is also bound to crumble one day.

Second Document

Letter written by Dr. Godbole to Shri K. S. Sudarshan

You might recall that I had recently put forth before you, my views on ‘Hindu organisations and the Muslim problem’ at the national meet of Prajna Bharati at Pune. Due to lack of time, I could not touch upon a very disturbing development viz. the formation of ‘Sarva Panth Samādar Manch’ by the Sangh. I am placing my views on the same for your kind consideration.

As I had outlined, the Muslim problem is essentially a problem of Islam and its theology - the Quran, Hadis, Sunnah all cultivate an exclusivist, separatist, imperialist political mind-set of its adherents, In this respect, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Marxism, Nazism, Fascism are all similar, It is only when followers of these ideologies outgrow/renounce these ideas that lasting peace is possible. There are encouraging signs that the foundations of Islam are showing cracks - many Muslims have begun to question the basic premises of Islam. Like Marxism, Islam as an ideology is bound to become a museum-piece. It is a pity that instead of encouraging the downfall of exclusivist ideologies, Hindu organisations, wittingly or otherwise, are giving props to them e.g. Sarva Panth Samadar Manch. The following issues arise in this context:

1. Does ‘Sarva Panth’ include only ‘panths’ arising from Bharatiya darshan and non-Biblical non-Bharatiya spiritual practices? If so, I welcome such a Manch. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case.
2. If it includes Islam and Christianity (which seems to be the case), why should it not include Marxism, Nazism and Fascism?
3. If the Manch is aimed at Muslims and their assimilation, I find the whole exercise naive and futile. ‘Sarva Panth Samadar’ goes against the very tenets of Islam. Instead of repeating parrot-like that all religions are alike, why don’t Hindu leaders bother to open the Quran and read it for themselves? It is a disservice to Muslims also to be told that Islam is an ideology worthy of equal respect. That a large section of humanity is in the thrall of such dangerous ideologies should be a matter of concern to us. PARADOXICALLY, MUSLIMS SHOULD BE VIEWED NOT AS OPPRESSORS BUT AS THE GREATEST VICTIMS OF ISLAM. THEY SHOULD BE WEANED FROM ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY.
4. If the Manch is aimed at Hindus, then Hindus anyway don’t need your preaching of ‘Sarva Panth Samādar’ - in fact they already have had too much of it. WHAT HINDUS NEED TODAY IS NOT SARVA PANTH SAMĀDAR BUT SARVA PANTH CHIKITSĀ. It is only then that they will see through and beware of political ideologies masquerading as religions. Outfits like the Manch are by definition useless in this respect because they start with the assumption that all religions are worthy of equal respect.
5. The concept of ‘Sarva Panth Samādar’ is even more dangerous than the concept of ‘Sarva Dharma Samabhāv’ mouthed by secularists. With the latter you are at least allowed equidistance from all religions. With the former, you actually ask me to show equal respect to

Sanatana Dharma and Islam.² This is not acceptable to me. Instead of indulging in verbal jugglery (Gandhian socialism, pseudo v/s true secularism, sarva panth samadar etc.), Hindu leaders should shed their intellectual inferiority complex and present a true Hindu world-view.

The question is - are Hindu leaders going to remain stubbornly ignorant and like Gandhiji's monkeys refuse to see and hear evil?

I hope you will excuse my frankness. I trust you will understand the anguish felt by a junior swayamsevak like me.

Information about the formation of the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch could not be included in the brochure because it was conveyed to us by Dr. Godbole after the brochure had been printed and put into circulation. His letter dated 21 October 1996 carried the following para:

Some information about Sarva Panth Samadar Manch - Founded on 16 April 1994 at Reshmibaug, Nagpur before the samadhi of Dr. Hedgewar during a meeting of state and national level functionaries of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh. The inaugural meeting of the SPSM was inaugurated by (who else?) Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. The all-India President is Prof. Jal Gimi, ex-VC, Nagpur University. The vice-Presidents are Shri Sukhnandan Singh, Shri Akhtar Hussain and Shri Gopi Masih. Offices and office-bearers of the Manch were formed all over India on 23 July 1994 (founding day of the BMS). The Manch observes 25 March as 'National Integration Day' as it is death anniversary of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

This letter from Dr. Godbole was received by us on 1 November 1996. On the same day we faxed the following message to A. Ghosh of Houston (Texas, U.S.A.):

"Sarva Panth Samadar Manch was formed on 16 April 1996 before the Samadhi of Dr. Hedgewar in Nagpur. It was inaugurated by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, blue-eyed boy of Sangh Parivar and leading light of Tablighi Jamaat, a wide-ranging movement for extinguishing all traces of Hindu culture from the consciousness and behaviour of Hindu converts to Islam. They insist on converts eating beef at a public meeting and marrying within degrees prohibited by Hinduism."

Ghosh had already received a copy of our brochure and written to us a few days earlier that it was being published as a full-page advertisement in the forthcoming Divali issue of the India Post, a weekly published from Los Angeles (California, U.S.A.). We had conveyed to him a brief characterization of the Tabligh movement on the basis of our extensive studies of it over the years. And we were happy to receive by airmail a copy of the India Post dated November 8, 1996 in which the brochure had been reproduced in full on its page A-21 with our fax message as a footnote in bold letters.

We may add here that the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) was launched in 1955 by Dattopant

² In a subsequent letter written to us, Dr. Godbole comments: "Incidentally, if they feel that Sanatana Dharma and Islam are worthy of equal respect, I see no reason for the VHP to continue its campaign of 'Paravartan' of Muslims and Christians."

Thengdi who is known, in the words of Dr. Godbole, as ‘the tallest intellectual of the Sangh Parivar’. His writings over the years go to show that he has not only swallowed heavy doses of Marxism but also developed a soft corner for Islam. The fulsome praise he had lavished on Prophet Muhammad in an article published in a Special Number of the Sangh Parivar’s Hindu weekly, Pāñchajanya, in 1986 had caused considerable stir in Sangh circles. We had received quite a few telephone calls and letters from swayamsevaks asking us to write a rejoinder giving the true facts about the Prophet. But we had better things to do than engage in debate with a wilfully blind and overconfident strategist of the Sangh Parivar. In any case, we knew from our experience that no mouthpiece of the Sangh Parivar would dare publish even a syllable doubting the wisdom of a Sangh stalwart.

II

The present compilation consists of five Sections and two Appendices.

Section I carries two articles - one by David Frawley which he was kind enough to e-mail on our specific request, and another which was written as the working paper for a Seminar held at the Deen Dayal Research Institute, New Delhi, in 1983. This section provides the perspective to the sections that follow.

Section II which is the core of this compilation includes 62 responses to our brochure. We had mailed more than a thousand copies of the brochure to regular readers of Voice of India publications in India and abroad. We had sent it also to those participants in the Pune Seminar who had been named by Dr. Godbole in his first letter. In addition, we had addressed copies to all leaders of the RSS, VHP, and BJP who normally function from New Delhi. One hundred copies of the brochure had been sent to Dr. Godbole who reported back that he had mailed it to all state and local functionaries of the RSS, BMS and affiliates in Maharashtra.

We received a total of 64 responses - 61 in English and three in Hindi. Two of the responses in Hindi were mainly devoted to denunciation of polytheism and idol-worship in Hinduism and were not at all relevant to the issues raised in the brochure. The names and addresses of the writers were also not quite clear. One of them was obviously written by a Muslim posing as an Arya Samajist. Both of them had to be discarded. The third response in Hindi has been included after being translated into English. This Section, therefore, carries 62 responses - 46 of them in separate chapters, and the rest (16) in a single chapter as they are brief.

The responses have been presented in an alphabetical order with reference of the surnames of the writers, in order to avoid the impression (or accusation) that we have given priority to some responses over others. We have not italicized or printed in capital letters a single word or sentence unless it was so emphasized in the original script. The language of the writers has been tempered with at no point except for correcting some spellings and straightening out some sentences. And we have edited out only those portions from some of the responses which were either irrelevant or repeated points already made.

Section III is intended to draw a clear distinction between Dharma on the one hand and Dogma on the other. It consists of two articles. The one by David Frawley has been reproduced from the inaugural number (January-March 1997) of Prajna published from Hyderabad. The other is a presentation by Suresh Desai of the Hindu Vivek Kendra, Bombay, to a Christian Seminary in that city. Permission for including these articles in this compilation has been sought and obtained from the authors.

Section IV was not a part of this compilation as it was originally planned. It took shape as we received, one after another, photocopies of six reviews of a very profound study of Islam - *Why I Am Not a Muslim* by Ibn Warraq - published in the U.S.A. in 1995. We did not know that such a book was in print till we received a copy of it from A. Ghosh after the reviews had arrived. Ghosh had neither seen the reviews nor sent them to us. They came from friends in the U.S.A. and England who frequently mail to us material which they think may be useful for us in our work. The reviews have been written by outstanding scholars of Islam in the West, and published in well known journals in the U.S.A. and England. They came as a providential windfall as if to confirm Dr. Godbole's point that 'Muslims should in fact be viewed as victims of Islam' (see p. vii above).

Ibn Warraq is the pseudonym of the author who says in his Preface: 'I was born into a Muslim family and grew up in a country that now describes itself as an Islamic republic. My close relatives identify themselves as Muslims: some more orthodox, some less.' The message of the book is contained in a passage quoted by Ibn Warraq from the famous French philosopher Ernest Renan: '**Muslims are the first victims of Islam**'. Many times I have observed in my travels in the Orient, that fanaticism comes from a small number of dangerous men who maintain the others in the practice of religion by terror. To liberate the Muslim from his religion is the best service that one can render him.' We have named Section IV in words emphasized above.

In Section V we have reproduced 30 reports from various newspapers regarding sayings and doings of some Sangh Parivar leaders aimed at winning over Muslims. They cover a period from 1994 to 1997. They speak for themselves. The meaning of isolated reports read at random is most likely to have been missed by readers who are supporters of or sympathise with the Sangh Parivar. But when they are read together, they are revealing as we have observed in naming this Section.

Appendix I is devoted to identifying, in a historical framework, the Tabligh movement to which Maulana Wahiduddin Khan belongs. We wonder if the Sangh leaders who patronize the Maulana are aware or have ignored the facts we have documented, from his own book and other sources. And we are not at all sure if the warning conveyed by these facts will be taken seriously by the Sangh strategists.

Finally, in Appendix II we have reproduced two studies on the problem posed by the flood of Muslim infiltrators from Bangladesh. The first study is a district-wise survey of the population explosion in West Bengal. The survey is based on the 1991 Census figures and has been documented by the South Asia Research Society, Calcutta. The second study was published by *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, in February 1996 in a series of three articles by a former Governor of West Bengal and a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India. The complete

silence which now prevails vis-à-vis this very serious problem is deafening indeed. The Sangh Parivar has also fallen in line with the ‘secularists’ after making some half-hearted noises before the 1996 Lok Sabha elections.

We are not drawing any conclusions from the material presented in this compilation. It is for the readers, particularly those belonging or sympathetic to the Sangh Parivar, to see if the Parivar has gone astray from the path which had been chalked out when the RSS was launched in 1925.

A companion volume to this compilation is being published simultaneously. It is named Bharatiya Janata Party vis-à-vis Hindu Resurgence. The author, Koenraad Elst, is well known to readers of Voice of India publications, and needs no introduction.

Voice of India

New Delhi
26 June 1996

The Perspective

1. A Call for an Intellectual (Bauddhika) Kshatriya - David Frawley

We live in the age of the information revolution, which has taken a quantum leap since the introduction of computers. The information flood is changing the nature of the society in which we live, in ways that we do not yet know and for which there is no precedent. This information revolution is in many respects an information war, with different groups struggling to put their views out to the general public as the truth. It is often a disinformation war as well, with groups trying to discredit those who have different views, using the media as their weapon.

In this contest whoever puts out information first usually gains credibility by defining the field. Whoever puts out information in the most sophisticated and high tech manner has the best audience and generally the best success in promoting their agenda. In the media realm packaging is more important than content and strong assertion often takes the role of real proof. People tend to believe what has been well presented in the media, even if it is otherwise biased or limited. Billions of dollars are being poured by various vested interest groups into this information war, with religious and political groups making great efforts to represent themselves in this new global arena. Advertisement, public relations, and lobbyists are hard at work, often to the highest bidder, to give a good image and strong media presence to their clients, if the price is right.

We live in a mass media dominated society, with daily exposure to some sort of radio, television, computer, newspaper or magazine. It has been said that the media is the message, that the media itself has made itself into the focus of our lives. The media has become our mind. Many of us spend more time taking in media information than interacting with other people or with the world of nature. These media images serve to build up our minds down to a subconscious level. They program our behavior, a fact that advertising has long known and sought to benefit from.

Now the Western information and media culture is spreading throughout the entire world, including what is called the third world, with the globalization of the world economy. Even villages are now getting television and the other trappings of Western modernity. India, China, and Asia in general are being brought under the influence of the media world.

Unfortunately, this Western media and commercial culture continues the same goals and influences as previous colonial forces, which only fifty years ago lost hold in Asia. This commercial culture seeks to supplant native and traditional cultures with a Western model, not only in terms of practical conveniences but in terms of thought and belief. It attempts to Americanize or Europeanize the world. Western religious groups, particularly Christian Evangelical groups, are learning to use the media for their advantage as well, doing preaching and proselytizing, and

broadcasting their mass rallies through the media. Yet Christians as a whole use the media in Asia to promote their agenda over native Asian religions, which the media often stereotypes as primitive.

Islamic groups are also realizing the power of the media and spending large sums to influence public opinion in the Western world, stressing the humanistic side of Islam. The Islamic lobby in the United States is one of the largest lobby groups in the country. In Islamic countries the power of the media is recognized both for good and ill. The media is strictly controlled by the state to project an Islamic image, and portray Islam only in a positive light, while striving to keep the Western media and its views out.

In the context of India the question arises where are Hindus in this information war and media presentation? The answer is that, with a few notable exceptions, Hindus generally are not present or only feebly present, apologetic or half-hearted in their self-presentation in the information field. The image of Hindus and of Hinduism that prevails in the information age is created by non-Hindus and by anti-Hindu forces, not only by intention but also by default because Hindus themselves seldom challenge wrong views or provide an alternative. In this way Hinduism is being eroded, particularly in the minds of young Hindus, who seldom find their religion represented, or who find it denigrated in the media world around them that is rapidly becoming their reality.

Since independence India has been dominated by Marxist and socialist thinking that has viewed Hinduism, with its spiritual and religious values, as its main enemy. Now gradually a more commercial influence is arising with economic liberalization, but it similarly is trying to undermine and replace Hindu culture, which, with its self-sufficiency and spirituality, does not make for an easy commercial target. Hindu culture, which managed to survive as the predominant model in India even through a thousand years of domination by first Islamic and then European Christian influences, finds itself under a new threat, less overt but perhaps for that very reason more dangerous.

The intelligentsia of India since independence has been often self-righteously anti-Hindu and naively accepting of Western ideologies, often merely echoing or imitating the old colonial and missionary propaganda against their own venerable complex religion that appears alien to these disenfranchised souls. The result is that the ruling political parties of India have done little to protect the dominant culture of the country from media distortions but have in fact often encouraged these. They have used anti-Hindu propaganda projected through the media both in the West and in India to try to keep Hindus suppressed and afraid of asserting themselves, so that there is no Hindu challenge to their power. The result is that Hinduism continues under siege and often with little defence, particularly in this new battleground. Even Hindu religious groups and leaders are often more concerned about their own particular faction and seldom willing to come to the defense of the culture as a whole.

Clearly unless this situation is corrected the future of Hinduism is threatened or at least diminished. While several Hindu groups have noticed this problem, it still has yet to be faced and addressed in a complete manner. Hindu society is becoming aware of their difficulty but it has yet to really awaken and deal with it in the real world.

The front line of the battle in the world today is no longer on any particular battlefield with the exchange of bullets or bombs. It lies now in the media and in the information field, which can be quite as deadly and poisoning in its results as any battlefield. Even the battles that are fought with weapons gain much more importance if the media is there. A few people killed in Israel can become world news and shape global strategies because of the media. Dozens of people killed in Sudan or China, where there is no media, will have no effect.

In this information war a different kind of warrior is necessary and a different strategy is required. This is not an entirely new issue because there has always been something of an information war in the clash of cultures, nations and religions that has occurred throughout history. But today it has much more importance in the information age and has become the central issue.

Each culture has its intellectual defenders. These are its great thinkers who articulate its cultural values. These intellectual defenders serve to challenge negative views of the culture. They also serve to present a more favorable image of the culture and define its future. Hindus traditionally had their Kshatriya or warrior class to defend them. There has always been an intellectual Kshatriya as well, those who defend the culture from attack in the realm of ideas, which usually precedes or accompanies physical attack.

However Hindus today have failed perhaps more than any other group to create a defense for their culture in the media world. Hindus are routinely portrayed through stereotypes of caste, dowry deaths, widow burning, strange cults, poverty and superstition. The worship of Shiva appears in The New York Times as the phallic cult of the God of destruction. Krishna is portrayed in Western universities as an erotic God with questionable morals. Brahmins appear in the Western media as rich landowners oppressing their poor slave Shudras, right out of communist propaganda stories.

The world mass media seldom considers any Hindu point of view. Though Hindus are the third largest religion in the world, and the largest non-biblical tradition, in many presentations of world religions Hindus are left out or denigrated as polytheists, idolaters and animists. Some universities in the West teach that Hinduism is not a religion at all but a collection of cults mainly of a primitive nature. Such schools also teach that India as a nation was created by the British and was otherwise just a collection of warring states with little in common.

Though India is the largest democracy in the world and the second most populated country, it has no permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council. In events of global importance neither an Indian or a Hindu point of view is given much consideration. In Bangladesh Hindus are under siege and frequently have their property taken from them. In Pakistan Hindus have been almost entirely eliminated. In neither country has there ever been any prominent Hindu leaders or government officials. In Fiji Hindus are routinely oppressed. In Malaysia they have to accept an inferior position, where Hindus can be converted to Islam but no Muslims can become Hindus. When Hindus work in Islamic Gulf countries Hindus have to hide their religion. Saudi Arabia requires that India send only a Muslim ambassador and India has always meekly complied, bowing down to a nation with 1/20 its population!

In India itself foreign missionary activity is perhaps at its highest point in history, particularly targeting tribal groups, even to the extent of encouraging them to secede from the nation and form Christian states. In South India Catholic priests routinely dress up like Hindu Swamis and go to the villages speaking of Yoga and Vedanta in order to convert Hindus to Christianity. Yet Hindus seldom raise a voice and the world hardly knows of these facts. And, most strangely, it is the media of India that works probably the hardest to suppress knowledge of these goings on.

In America the large Islamic lobbyist money works to promote a positive image of Islam and does not hesitate to denigrate Hindus or India. In England Pakistanis organize to create a political influence and bend their politicians to criticize India on Kashmir, while Hindus in the same country, in perhaps larger numbers and affluence, do little to counter this. There are many other examples of the same phenomenon, a Hindu indifference to the media that puts them at a disadvantage even in their own country.

What Hindus need today, in fact what the whole world needs is an intellectual Kshatriya or intellectual warrior class. It needs a group of dedicated workers and activists who uphold the Dharma against this media and information onslaught. Such individuals must be above commercial manipulation and self-promotion, working tirelessly to counter this disinformation flood.

Yet this movement must start in India and in the Hindu community itself to be really credible. For example, when Hindus in America complained against media distortions of Hindu groups in India to The New York Times they were told that the information came from Delhi itself. Clearly the change must start in India to have any real effect.

In India the English language media is generally anti-Hindu and often pro-Marxist. The universities in India are frequently dominated by professors whose heart is not in the Dharma of their country but in Western materialism. Kerala and Bengal today remain under the yoke of communist governments. In Kerala Hindu workers are being killed. In Bengal Hindu sadhus are commonly attacked. It is no wonder that Hindus outside of India are subject to oppression, when Hindus in India itself are under siege.

The Vedas say that Brahma or spiritual power and Kshatra or political power must go together. When Brahma or spiritual power develops it creates an appropriate Kshatra or social power to extend its influence into society. It provides a dharmic order to our human relations, both individual and collective. If Brahma or spiritual power fails to impact the social order and raise the social Dharma, then it is a sign that this Brahma or spiritual power itself has failed, that it is not legitimate or real.

Sri Krishna, the great avatar, worked throughout his life to create a dharmic Kshatriya, an order of noble souls who could establish and sustain a dharmic social order. He was willing to promote a great battle, a civil war among the Kshatriyas themselves, to allow his handpicked dharmic Kshatriya followers to gain power. He purified the Indian Kshatriya with the blood of a dharmic war. Because of his great achievement a Kshatriya order was established that maintained a dharmic society for many centuries. This example should not be lost on us today. The Kshatriya of India

today, its social and political leaders, require a similar dharmic purification, perhaps not a Kurukshetra in the literal sense but a purification from false values and egoistic practices that are rampant everywhere.

Let us also look at the example of the great Swami Vidyaranya of Sringeri, an Advaitin and a Mayavadin, who yet inspired two Hindu Kshatriyas who had become Muslims to reconvert to Hinduism and found the great Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar to protect the Dharma. Would not one say that if all is Maya or illusion, why would a great Swami start a kingdom? Such a question shows a profound misunderstanding of Hindu Dharma. One can only transcend the world by fulfilling one's dharma and one's karma, and even if one has done so for oneself, one still has the duty to others to teach, guide and raise the world. Let us also look at the example of Samartha Ramadas, who inspired the great King Shivaji.

Unfortunately so far modern India has not created a Prime Minister of this sort of inspiration. Many modern Hindus, taking up an excessive view of non-violence, have rejected the idea of any Hindu Kshatriya altogether. They have felt that Hindus should not have an army and should not defend themselves against violence, but should rather offer themselves meekly to their enemies. This attitude has naturally led to the idea that Hindus should not even challenge media distortions of them.

However in the Vedic view a country cannot exist without a Kshatriya order, which is the pillar of the society. The Mahabharata states that if there is not a righteous Kshatriya rulership that employs the danDa (rod) or is willing to punish adharma, then the people will end up eating each other. In the information age we could say that if Hindus do not create an intellectual Kshatriya then the people will end up destroying themselves with false beliefs and propaganda.

If a dharmic Kshatriya is not created through the force of Brahma or spiritual knowledge, then the law is that an adharmic Kshatriya will come to fill in the vacuum. This is exactly what occurred not only in modern India but throughout the rest of the world. After the excessive non-violence in the Indian independence movement no genuine Kshatriya could or was created in the country. This left the country prey to a false Kshatriya, based mainly upon Marxist ideals, mixed with war lord temperaments, such as we have found in communist countries, who similarly have misled the people and prevented the real growth of the nation.

One must remember the example of the Sikhs in India. Originally a purely spiritual movement, they were forced to take up arms and to adapt a Kshatriya order by the cruel oppression perpetrated against them by the Muslim rulers of the time, in which torture and genocide was the rule of the day. In this way they grew and flourished and became a force to be reckoned with.

Unfortunately India as a whole at that time did not take up the call of Sikh Dharma, which was the call for a real Kshatriya revival. The resurgent voice of Hindu Dharma that both Brahma and Kshatra are required, that spiritual knowledge must create a strong social order and discipline, was muffled. This movement of a new spiritual Kshatriya of modern Hindus, which the Sikhs began, needs to be completed today, not only for the regeneration of Hindu society but for the revival of

Sanatana Dharma or the universal tradition of truth throughout the world. But it must be completed not so much in the field of arms as in the field of ideas. The only Kshatriya that can carry the day today is the intellectual Kshatriya.

Hindus must create a new intelligentsia that has the power to overcome and absorb the alienated and Western dominated intellectuals of India. Hindus must project an intellectual view that is articulate and compelling. They must bring the influence of Sanatana Dharma to the intelligentsia of the world. For a culture that has produced such thinkers as the Vedic seers, Upanishadic sages, Kapila, Buddha, Patanjali and Shankara, and in the modern times Sri Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi, this is certainly possible. In fact we can find in such great modern figures of India as Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda good models of intellectual Kshatriya as well as spiritual masters. Clearly the success of Hindus in such intellectual fields as science, computers, engineering and medicine shows that they have the capacity. What is lacking is the motivation, the guidance, and perhaps the inspiration.

Another mistake Hindus have made is being too accommodating under the guise of synthesis, which erodes clear thinking. Under the guise that all religions are one Hindus hesitate to develop a proper criticism, however justified, of the exclusivist creeds working to convert them, and of other adharmic actions done in the name of religion in the world. There is also the danger that in trying to attract minorities into their fold Hindu groups in India will seek to appease minorities rather than to help them in a dharmic way. The true Kshatriya will help and lead, giving a positive direction for others to follow, not merely appease and accommodate in order to gain popularity. A true Kshatriya is devoted to dharma and cannot be won over by name, fame, influence or money.

The youth in particular need to be awakened to this call for an intellectual Kshatriya. They have the idealism and the vision of the future, as well as the vitality, but this needs to be directed not only by a spiritual urge but one that addresses the problems of society as well. To be truly relevant, particularly to the youth, this intellectual voice must address not only the social issues of today but environmental problems, the role of science, and the future evolution of humanity.

An intellectual Kshatriya must not merely be defensive but creative and expansive. It must project a positive view of Hindu Dharma, and give it a futuristic vision. Its purpose is not merely to adjust present or historical wrongs but chart out a new direction for all to follow. In this regards Hindu intellectuals must go to the universal roots of their tradition and find a compelling vision that can gather people of all backgrounds, helping them break through limited and unspiritual beliefs, toward a yogic vision of humanity. This is not to water down Hindu Dharma but to revitalize it in the world today. This new Kshatriya must be willing to spread Hindu Dharma in a dynamic way along the lines of the old Vedic impulse - **kriNvanto visvam āryam**, make all the world noble.

Such an intellectual Kshatriya must be based upon deep thought. It cannot be developed through mere rhetoric, character assassination, or slogans. It requires not only a well thought out critique but a positive program of action. It requires not only a Hindu examination of religion, science and politics, but the creation of a Hindu alternative to existing systems. It also requires a model for revitalizing Hindu society itself.

For those who wish to take up the role of intellectual Kshatriya there is much that can be done. An intellectual Kshatriya must challenge media distortions, whether in schools, books, newspapers, or in the media or the internet. It must also produce genuine information expressing the truth of Sanatana Dharma, whether relative to history, art, politics, religion or philosophy. This means a new revival in the field of Hindu education, which is perhaps the key factor.

This Hindu intelligentsia must be willing to debate with other groups, including exposing their distortions and wrong beliefs. It must resurrect the tradition of tarka or intellectual debate that makes the darshanas or philosophies of Hinduism so significant. It must create a forum in which everything is critically examined so only truth remains. In short, it must wield the sword of viveka or discrimination, discerning the true from the false, and not bowing down to ignorance anywhere.

This new intellectual Kshatriya must also throw up an ethical challenge, which is the challenge of Dharma, exposing the danger of exclusivist religious cults, materialistic political philosophies, and unchecked commercialism. The West throws its ethical challenge to the world, criticizing other countries, including India, for a lack of human rights. This requires a Hindu response. Let us take an obvious example, the same America that tries to speak for human rights and democracy all over the world is also the biggest weapons seller and arms supplier in the world. The biggest buyers of these weapons are the Gulf Oil producing Islamic states, none of which are democracies and none of which have good human rights records, yet none of which are under any American imposed sanctions. Clearly the Western voice of human rights is not truly dharmic but motivated by commercial and nationalistic interests. Hindus need to create an ethical alternative to such questionable Western humanitarianism.

For it to truly develop, Hindu groups must cultivate and honor their intellectual Kshatriya, which not only includes listening to them but promoting their views, and funding their work if necessary. They must stop hiding in the veil of spirituality and allowing the forces of adharma to rule the world and even pontificate over their religion, telling them what it is and what it is worth.

In Western intellectual circles the talk today is of a '*clash of civilizations*'. This is mainly spoken of as a clash between the West and Islam, or a clash between the West and Chinese culture. In this clash of world civilizations the Hindu has been recognized as one of the players but has already been written off as minor. Why is this the case? Because the Hindu voice has only a small place in the world sphere whether politically, economically or intellectually. Clearly without an intellectual Kshatriya, Hindus will not likely be part of this churning out of a new world order.

Now such may not be pleasant items for Hindus to hear. Should we rather not speak of Rama and Krishna and forget this turmoil of Kali Yuga, some might say? True spirituality is not an escape but a transcendence. A truly spiritual person can face the facts of the world, however unpleasant, without having to turn away or without losing inner composure. This is also the message of Rama and Krishna, if we really look at their lives and actions.

There are those who may fear that an intellectual Hindu Kshatriya may promote a new Hindu fundamentalism or oppression of minorities in India. The Hindu Kshatriya tradition is not one of

aggression but of protection, not of forcing conversion to a religion but upholding the Dharma. It is a tradition of holding to truth and creating a culture in which freedom to pursue truth, not only in the outer world, but in the religious realm, is preserved. Is this not what the global age really requires? It is time for that Kshatriya to arise again. The extent that it does will be the measure of the future of India and perhaps of any dharmic revival in this generally adharmic world. Let us hope that this call is heeded! Who is there to answer it?

2. Ideological Defence of Hindu Society – Sita Ram Goel

1. Ideological aggression, if not resisted in proper time, leads invariably to physical aggression.
2. Instead of promoting a physical clash, ideological defence
 - i. prevents it most of the time because the aggressor stands warned that he would be resisted;
 - ii. or minimises one-sided violence because the victim also stands well-prepared;
 - iii. and often helps the aggressor to drop his habit because he comes to know that the other side knows his designs or that there is another side of the story.
3. Hindu society has been facing ideological aggression.
 - i. from Islam, for more than thirteen hundred years with the result that Islam has gained a large population of converts who have staged repeated rounds of violence besides partitioning the country and forming permanently hostile states on both sides of our borders;
 - ii. from Christianity, for nearly five hundred years with the result that native converts in the North-East now feel sufficiently strong to mount a series of violent insurrections;
 - iii. from Communism, for more than fifty years during which we have witnessed several rounds of violence.
4. Hindu history goes to show that Hindu society has rarely put forward an ideological defence and all along tried to correct the aggressor by the catholicity of its spiritual culture.
5. While Hindu society has survived due to its intrinsic strength, it has not been able to stop ideological aggression followed by physical aggression, and has suffered staggering losses in terms of territory, population and morale, which is more important.

II

6. By now Hindu society has been thrown on the defensive to such an extent that even a mild protest against further aggression invites accusations of intolerance, communalism and chauvinism.
7. The aggressive ideologies operating within the Hindu homeland have entrenched themselves in the shape of whole communities and have many centres and seminaries which send out an ever-increasing number of ideologically equipped cadres for spreading their tentacles farther afield.
8. Being foreign in their origins, these ideologies have powerful international allies who provide to

them massive aid and abetment - financial, diplomatic and moral-psychological.

9. On the other hand, traditional Hindu saints, sannyasins and scholars have not been able to meet the challenge

- i. either because it does not register in their awareness on account of their total preoccupation with indigenous themes;
- ii. or because they regard these aggressive ideologies as similar to Hindu sects which have to be accommodated in the over-all framework of traditional Hindu tolerance;
- iii. or because they do not understand the true character and dimensions of aggression, even when they recognise it as such.

10. The English-educated Hindu elite which controls the commanding heights in government, educational institutions and mass media has failed the test

- i. either because it has become indifferent to Hindu society as a result of having imbibed the current cosmopolitan culture;
- ii. or because it has been trained to look at Hindu society through eyes which are not of its own ancestral culture and, as a result, has become sceptical about, if not actually hostile to the merits of Hindu society;
- iii. or because it is too ignorant of Hindu spirituality, cultural creativity, social philosophy and historical traditions to put up a worthwhile defence even when it is sympathetic and wants to stop the aggression.

11. This desperate situation has been made more difficult by a degenerate politics through which vote-hungry, sloganised, short-sighted and nominally Hindu politicians

- i. weaken Hindu society by dividing it on the basis of caste, sect, language and region;
- ii. disarm Hindu society by sanctimonious and one-sided appeals in the name of traditional Hindu tolerance;
- iii. strengthen alienated and aggressive communities by supporting their separatist demands in the name of secularism.

III

12. It is high time for Hindu society to take up a determined stand against ideological aggression and organise its own defence on an ideological basis.

13. The defence has to be simultaneous on two fronts:

- i. strengthening, reforming, revitalizing and reaffirming our own religious, cultural, educational and social institutions and traditions;
- ii. exposing the true character of aggressive ideologies with reference to their own sources and history and in the light of Hindu thought.

14. The first task has to be shouldered mainly by Hindu religious leaders and socio-cultural movements, though there is ample scope for Hindu scholarship to present the deeper unity of Hindu schools of thought and spirituality, of Hindu cultural variety and of Hindu social traditions, as also the heroic strain in Hindu history, with a view to restore Hindu pride in its own rich heritage.

15. The second task is essentially that of Hindu scholarship which can collect, collate, interpret and present correct knowledge not only about the character of aggressive ideologies but also about their means and methods.

IV

16. This ideological struggle for defence of Hindu society and against aggressive ideologies has to be viewed and waged not only in the Indian context but also on a global scale so that

- i. we find our own international allies in ideological forces which are in accord with our own culture;
- ii. we are able to turn back the aggressive ideologies in their own bases abroad.

V

17. A start can be made in the shape of a Hindu Centre in India which

- i. will contact and bring together whatever scholars with a Hindu perspective are already available in the country;
- ii. reorient such scholars as have the requisite intellectual equipment but lack the Hindu perspective;
- iii. train new scholars with a Hindu perspective in different disciplines.

18. In due course, this Centre can become the mother of many more centres in India and abroad, all of which can be, at some stage, coordinated into an International Hindu Centre.

VI

19. Utmost care should be taken to see that the whole effort in developing this scholarship is thought-oriented and not status-oriented, which means that

- i. scholars who have the Hindu perspective as also the courage to present it publicly should be cultivated and honoured;
- ii. scholars who have the Hindu perspective but not the courage to present it publicly in the prevailing atmosphere should be given every support so that they come out into the open;

- iii. scholars who have status in the present set-up but not the Hindu perspective should be ignored or at least not provided with an additional platform;
- iv. scholars who play the tune for whoever pays them should be scrupulously avoided.

VII

20. The Hindu perspective relating to different problems and fields of scholarship can be evolved by a committee of religious and socio-cultural leaders and scholars who have given thought to the current situation.

21. Another committees of men of means and influence should be formed to raise the necessary resources.³

³ This was written at the behest of Shri K.S. Sudarshan of the RSS to serve as the working paper of a series of seminars at different places in the country. The first seminar was held at the Deen Dayal Research Institute, New Delhi, in 1983 and was attended by several bigwigs of the RSS as well as the VHP. The writer of the working paper had also been invited. But when he saw the working paper that was distributed to the participants, he found that it was not the paper he had written but its 'summary' distilled by some Sangh scribe. The logic, language and spirit of the original paper had been more or less completely knocked out. (The Sangh Parivar never touches anything which does not originate from within it, or unless it has been messed up by one of its members. No Hindu outside the Sangh Parivar carries any credit with the Parivar unless the person has status either in terms of wealth or in the eyes of the secularist establishment.) The discussion that followed was a free for all, the underlying refrain being that the Sangh 'knows it all, has always known it, and can and will solve all problems in due course'. The only substantial contribution was made by an RSS lawyer hailing from Anantnag in Kashmir. "I have studied Islam in depth," he said, "and found it to be a great religion. I cannot understand anyone placing Islam in the dock." Ironically enough this defender of Islam was literally the first to be shot dead when the ethnic cleansing started in the Valley in the winter of 1989. The V.P. Singh Government with I.K. Gujral as its Minister of External Affairs provided the opportunity the Islamic terrorists were waiting for.

The Responses

1. G.V. Ashtekar⁴

At the outset, I must acknowledge the truth in the objections raised by Dr. Shreerang Godbole. I also take this opportunity of expressing my deep respect and reverence about the work done by Voice of India for awakening Hindu scholars for the new outlook as well as for presenting them with the perceptions and facets of Hindutva which had remained elusive for centuries.

I firmly believe that the leadership of the RSS which has consented to this new step, do know these facts very well. However, as per the typical RSS way of functioning, there have been no explanations on this stand.

On this point, I think, we have to first take into consideration the following factors:

-6th December 1992 changed political and social concepts, equations and ideas nearly all over the world. It was bound to affect the Muslims of India as well as many scholars from among them. En masse assertiveness shown by Hindus at Ayodhya, did make them think of Hindus in a different perspective than followed hitherto. The failure of their leadership was all the more evident to them.

-On the request of some Muslim editors, there was a dialogue in Mumbai on 31 July 1996 between RSS leaders and Muslim leaders/editors. Shri Sudarshanji led the RSS side. The response and the results have been very promising.

It is obvious that the need for dialogue was felt more by Muslim scholars than by RSS leaders. Some time back, it was proposed that the Hindu Vivek Kendra should host the next dialogue, and since then there have been a number of calls from Muslim editors for fixing the date for it. Frankly, it must be understood that it is our response which is cool and it is they who want to understand us, although what they want at present is only reassurance of their safety.

The reason is that they are feeling a nebulous fear that Hindus are now united to a great extent, and that Muslims cannot have the run of the affairs of the country or its politics any more. It is this feeling which has brought about a sea change in the voting pattern in Maharashtra. Even their scholars are having second thoughts and this was reflected in the JNU elections where the ABVP has swept the polls.

The overtures made by Muslims are not worthless. We must take into consideration that Indian Muslims are basically of Hindu origin, and that that is why in Pakistan and Bangla Desh women can adorn the highest office of the PM. I am repeating this point although it has come for criticism by Dr. Godbole because, in spite of his arguments, the grassroot workers' experience has been very reassuring on this point. In this connection, I may invite attention to some unique experiences related by Shri Brahmachari Vishwanathji who reconverted hundreds of people back to Hinduism. He had described the yearning of a number of converts to return to their roots.

⁴ The writer is a Swayamsevak of the RSS, now working in the Hindu Vivek Kendra at Mumbai.

The question here is: Is the approach of Muslim scholars sincere? Do they really want to come closer?

The indication is: THIS TIME IT IS, YES. In fact, I believe that the process so far followed in this country has been reversed WHEN IT HAS COME TO RSS. One of the reasons is that Muslims are definitely aware of one thing - the transparency of RSS as well as the aims which are diametrically opposite to theirs, and there is no likelihood of any change in RSS attitude.

Secondly, there is no tangible financial or political gain that the Muslim community can derive directly from RSS since RSS does not hold any power as has been the case with Congress or others.

The other point is: What should be the aim of RSS?

Now, I believe, our leadership is quite clear on this issue. It is an approach in which we have:

First, to get Hindus organised - in which respect apparently Hindus themselves if not RSS entirely, have become successful to a measure. They are turning self-assertive, even aggressive at times, so much so that Muslims are now apprehensive of Hindu resurgence.

Secondly, to get the non-Hindus to have national attitude. THIS has been voiced by all Sarsanghchalaks including Guruji Golwalkar as well as Deorasji and Rajjubhaiji. But both communities have been kept so much apart that they have forgotten to share a common living. Once it happens, Muslims will have to learn to modify the Koranic commands to suit today's age as Hindus have been doing in case of the sacred commands of Smritis.

Thirdly, it is only the RSS which can show the Muslims their correct, honourable and equitable place in the democratic set up of India, and get the best mileage of understanding from them. No discussions on religious level can do it. In fact, conversions or re-conversions by conviction or philosophical discussions have been possible only in highly exceptional cases. It is possible on the basis of either physical force, or behavioural patterns, or understanding attitudes, or reforms from within. As Shri Guruji had said many times, the reforms in Muslim society have to be thought of and launched by reformers from Muslim society itself. As we keep making Hindus aware of Islam, Koran and Hadis, it should percolate to Muslims too, but through their own people. Otherwise, it will have a counterproductive effect. Knowing the history of Islam, we can only say that it will be a slow and patient process. However, the first step has to be taken, however long may be the road to the goal.

Fourthly, typical of RSS culture, we will not - repeat not - dodge the problem or get away from it. RSS has now attained a stage where it is getting wide support of Hindu society at large, of which the common Muslim is becoming aware. RSS will attack this problem in its own patient and skilful way as it has done with the problem of untouchability.

Fifthly, we must keep in mind - which has always been the case with RSS - that this is our own

country, and we have to take care of its people. While we consolidate Hindus, we have now reached a position when history has entrusted us with a certain overall responsibility of this country's future. We have to encompass the Bharatvarsha and its people in our sphere of activities, we have to slowly make the non-Hindus realise their oneness with mainstream Hindu Society, and take them with us in the march towards all-round progress.

Lastly, there must be a realistic solution and not just theories. Theories lack the true spirit of work. We may win an argument but we will lose a friend. Besides, in whatever we try to do, Hindu ethos is totally averse to any genocide or forceful imposition of philosophy. Our culture is rich enough to spread itself in due course. We believe in the future and strength of this country. Hindutva and RSS taking interest in all spheres, our country will achieve its due place and that's that.

RSS is the hope for the entire nation - a force which will correct excesses as well as shortages. It is capable of bestowing on Muslims the most precious thing which has not been done by others, i.e. **Self-respect**. It has done so in the case of the, Harijans, and among Hindus. It can do it as well for Muslims and make them aware of their rights and duties as Indian citizens on par with Hindus.

There is no reason to think for a moment that RSS will lose its commitment to Hindutva and Hindu interests. On the contrary, it will ensure its continuance and forward march to the welfare of all Indians.

2. Professor G.C. Asnani⁵

1. I broadly agree with the stand taken by Dr. Shreerang Godbole.
2. In a labour organisation concerned with purely economic problem, why bring religion - Sarva Dharma, etc.?
3. We were five student friends studying in Karachi College in the beginning of 1940s. One of us started taking interest in the RSS. The rest of us vehemently opposed him, calling him communalist; we were nationalists, secularists, congressites. We believed in Mahatma Gandhi's approach of love and Hindu-Muslim bhai-bhai. When Mahatma Gandhi failed in his vow to oppose partition of India, and he succumbed to Muslim demand for partition, we got shaken and somewhat disillusioned.
4. Then came the question of Hindus staying inside Sindh even after partition. I was surprised to find that the very Sindhi Congress leaders who were advising Sindhi Hindus on public platform to stay on in Sindh after partition, were themselves quietly making preparations for running out to Bharat, seeking security for themselves and their families, cheating the poor Sindhi Hindu masses. I questioned one of my leader friends, "What is it that you are doing? You are advising the gullible Sindhi Hindus to stay on in Pakistan while you are making preparations to run out before them?" These leaders had become experts in practising cheating and hypocrisy; they ran with the hare and hunted with the hound.
5. Even after all such leaders ran out - they actually flew out in aeroplanes - safely to this side of India, they started preaching the same old thing over again (Hindu-Muslim bhai-bhai) since that was a very profitable and paying profession on this side of India. They again opposed those whom they had called communalists before, before themselves flying out of Sindh, leaving the poor gullible Sindhi Hindus in the lurch. Then I had some correspondence with one of them, who was preaching love and love between Hindus and Muslims; I asked him, "Who invited you to come here to India, leaving Sindh? If you really believe in what you preach on public platform, then the most honest thing for you will be to go back to Pakistan and preach your philosophy of love".

Where do you find consistency between preaching and practice? Great men preach, the poor gullible Hindus suffer and suffer.

6. Then I happened to go and live outside India, once for one year in USA and then continuously for eight years in International University circles in Africa. I felt intellectually free from the foggy atmosphere which prevailed in India in respect of **SECULARISM**. I found that practically all the **SECULAR** States of Europe including **England** had their State religion, which the Head of the

⁵ The writer is now settled in Pune after having worked as a Professor in the United Nations Service for several years. His devotion to Hindu causes is well known.

State was, by law, obliged to protect. In fact, in England, not only a non-Christian cannot be the Head of the State; even amongst Christians, a Roman Catholic cannot be the Head of the State; the Head has to be an Anglican Christian. There are laws and privileges for the Church enforced by the State. Religious minorities have limited freedom to offer their prayers and worship of God; but they have no special privileges which the religious majority community does not have.

On April 5, 1982, the House of Representatives in USA decided that the year 1983 should be observed in the United States as the '**Year of the Bible**' and, accordingly, under his own signature, President Ronald Reagan of USA made the Declaration to this effect. (See Appendix)

I wondered what hue and cry would be raised in India, by the supporters of secularism of UK and USA, if the President of India were to declare any year as the '**Year of the Geeta**'.

Governments of UK and USA know very well that part of the government money and government concessions in taxes given to the churches goes out of their countries for the purpose of **conversions to Christianity**. In other words, these secular governments support their churches to spread Christianity throughout the world. This is true practically for all governments of Europe.

Indian secularism is of a very peculiar variety which, perhaps, the so-called secularists of India do not understand. They have just caught the English word '**secularism**' without understanding its meaning in theory and practice and go on parroting this word day and night.

7. A friend of mine sent me a book published in USA. The book was titled '**The X-Rated Bible**'. It quoted several passages from the '**Holy Bible**', which were extremely revolting to my conscience and sense of Hindu ethics as known to me. I could hardly believe that there existed a book where God had commanded His followers to batter the heads of babies in the presence of their parents, to rape the women in the presence of their husbands, to burn the cities, to capture the virgins of the conquered towns, and to kill the married women and the first born male child of every non-believer, etc.; that God was jealous and had entered into a covenant with his chosen community, ordering it to go and conquer the whole earth, to subjugate and convert the people of other religious faiths; that God had made the Church infallible and given it absolute authority to rule over men and women on this earth and in heaven perpetually; that the believers and obedient servants of the Church shall have the divine authority to enjoy this earth and to live in luxurious paradise eternally after death; and that non-believers were condemned to perpetual slavery and eternal hell.

Amazed and not believing these quotations, I checked with my copy of the Holy Bible and found the statements to be absolutely correct, printed in black and white in my copy of the Holy Bible which I had purchased in Nairobi. I went out and purchased another copy of the Holy Bible from the Catholic Book Shop in Pune. It was just the same.

Even Jesus Christ whom I had always believed to be a preacher of love and peace had the following words put in his mouth:

"I came to set the earth on fire. Do you suppose that I came to bring peace to the world? No, not peace but division."

From now on a family of five will be divided, three against two and two against three. Fathers will be against their sons and sons against their fathers; mothers will be against their daughters and daughters against their mothers; mothers-in-law will be against their daughters-in-law and daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law” (Holy Bible, New Testament, Luke 12. 49-52).

Also, Jesus Christ was advising his believer followers, “*Sell your coat and buy a sword*” (Holy Bible, New Testament, Luke 22.36).

Having verified the quotations, I could now understand the history of the struggle between the Church on one hand and the rulers and intellectuals of Europe on the other hand about which I had read in the textbooks of history in my college days. Men of reason and moral sense could not accept such teachings as rational and ethical.

I could also understand why Communism had risen in Russia, altogether prohibiting religion and the Church in USSR. The Communists had gone to the other extreme, ignoring the basic urge of a human being to offer prayers and to worship God. Religion cannot be expelled from the life of a human being.

I also read ‘**Crux Ansata: An Indictment of the Roman Catholic Church**’ by the noted historian **H.G. Wells**. It reveals the role of the Church in creating dissensions and wars in the world.

I also read the book ‘**Why I am not a Christian**’ written by the **Nobel Laureate Bertrand Russell**. He was disgusted with the dogmas of Christianity which had created wars and blockaded the freedom of thought and belief.

8. I then turned to the study of Islam. Instead of going to second rate and third rate literature on Islam, I took up the study of the Holy Koran and The Hadis. I was surprised to find almost similar instructions in the Holy Koran as in the Holy Bible in respect of relationship between **Believers** and others. Believers were given instructions by Allah and the Prophet to rob, to murder and to burn the habitats of non-believers wherever and whenever they could find the strength to do so. Allah had also entered into a covenant with the Believers and Prophet Mohammed, giving them authority to rule over the earth for all time to come and then enjoy houris in heaven, authority and obligation to remove all other religions from the surface of the earth. According to the command of the Holy Prophet, there has to be a perpetual religious war (**Jihad**) between the Muslims and non-Muslims, urging the Muslims to convert the non-Muslims through persuasion, **terrorism** and regular march of the armed forces, destroying the communities and townships which refuse to yield and get converted to Islam. The Believers were advised to lay in ambush and suddenly attack the non-believers unawares when the latter were either in sleep or at play!

I could now **understand why Mahatma Gandhi failed to resist the partition of India**. There was a clear and logical connection between the history of Islam including the partition of India and the teachings of the Holy Quran and The Hadis. Events were moving with mathematical precision. Given the startling exhortations of these ‘**religious**’ teachings, results cannot be different. **There is cold logic, with cause-and-effect in life**. Only we have to understand it. Muslim violence and

terrorism which is on the increase throughout the world at present, gets its continuous food from the teachings of the Holy Quran and The Hadis. Why call them fundamentalists? They are just following the teachings of their scriptures. We need **hard work** and **capacity** to understand the cold logic of the past and current events of history. Running around and delivering vote-catching speeches do not help our understanding.

Suspecting that I might be having incorrect translations of the ‘Holy Koran’ and ‘The Hadis’, I referred to different editions of these scriptures including those edited by noted Muslims scholars and published by orthodox publishing houses.

I felt certain that I was not reading wrong translations.

I could now understand the history of Islam which I had read in textbooks in my school and college days.

I had seen the extreme aggressiveness of the Muslim community before the partition of India. I also witnessed their somewhat subdued attitude immediately after the partition. Soon, their aggressiveness increased. When I returned to India towards the end of 1982 after an 8-year long stay outside India, I found the increased aggressiveness of the Muslim community as in pre-partition days. By this time, the Christian churches had also become aggressive.

9. Having studied the teachings of different religions, I could see the logic of increasing aggressiveness of the Muslim community and the churches. I could also see why a number of Hindu politicians were committing the same mistake of appeasement of aggressive minorities which was made by Hindu leaders before the partition. The Hindu leaders had neither the time nor the patience to study the basic structures of the proselytizing religions like Christianity and Islam. I came to the following conclusions:

(i) Basically, every human being wants to live a life of peace and happiness, seeking protection of God and worshipping Him for protection and peace. As such, every human being turns to his religion.

(ii) Every religion has three aspects:

- a) Relationship between a person and God.
- b) Relationship between a person and other persons having the same religion.
- c) Relationship between a person and persons of other religions.

Broadly speaking, all religions teach the same thing in respect of aspect (a) and (b) above, e.g. pray to God, help and love others, help the persons in difficulties, etc. That is absolutely fine; there can be no quarrel with it.

However, **in respect of (c), all religions do not teach the same thing**. Proselytizing religions insist on religious conversion of persons thus getting them inside their own walls and fences if they are to receive love and help. They divide the human family into two warring factions: Believers and

non-believers; the latter are despicable persons and there has always to be a war with them until they are converted. Hence, the religious institutions of the proselytizing religions inculcate, in the minds of their followers, a feeling of hatred against other religions and their followers; they are goaded to be at war with them, even though outwardly they may speak sweetly. Thus, inter-religious wars are created by the proselytizing religions, first in the minds of men, then on public platforms through political alignments, and finally on battle-grounds.

Policy of conversions is a declaration of war against other religions.

Inter-religious wars between Islam and Christianity are currently going on in Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, Yugoslavia, Algeria, Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Philippines and Indonesia. These wars are inherent in the teachings of these religions. Even Roman Catholics and Protestants are fighting in Ireland. **There are no ‘communal’ Hindus in these countries to be blamed for wars.**

10. Hinduism is very different from these proselytizing religions in respect of aspect (c), i.e. **relationship between a person and persons of other religions.** Hinduism believes that there is one God but his manifestations are infinite in number. Devotees of God can worship Him in infinite number of ways. All forms of worship lead a person to God provided that the devotee is sincere in his worship and noble in his conduct. God is limitless and boundless. All boundaries created in the name of religion between Believers and non-believers and covenants with God are man-made. The essence of man is divine; the role of religion is to manifest that divinity which is already in man, irrespective of the religious community in which a person is born. Like a mother, God understands the cry of a child, in whichever language the child speaks. It is not proper for any religion to spread perpetual hatred against persons of other religions, using the name of God to exterminate other societies along with their social, religious and political structures. If they persist in these activities, **they are not religions but aggressive political ideologies.**

If proselytizing religions do not give up their narrow-mindedness, dividing human race into holy Believers and unholy non-believers, they will land themselves and the whole world into terrible inter-religious warfare. **Here, Hinduism has a message for the whole world.**

All human beings belong to one human family. The merit of a person on this earth and after death is to be judged by the nobleness of his conduct and not by the creed he professes and the prophet to whom he declares his allegiance. Let us all worship God, with a sincere heart, in whatever form of worship we like. God knows the sincerity of men and the devotion of his devotees. God is the father, the mother, the protector of all, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, colour, age, or sex. This broad-mindedness of Hinduism will ultimately be accepted by the whole world and every person will learn to live in peace with every other person as a human being above everything else. Nobleness of conduct towards one another is a primary thing for peaceful collective life.

11. It is high time that we Hindus study the teachings of various religions, and learn from facts of history; at least we should read studies made by eminent scholars of the world. I give below some quotations from the book, **The Hindu Way of Life**, written by **Prof. Radhakrishnan, late**

President of India:

- (i) From the Rishis, or seers, of the Upanishads down to Tagore and Gandhi, the Hindu has acknowledged that truth wears vestures of many colours and speaks in strange tongues (p. 27).
- (ii) **Hinduism is wholly free from the strange obsession of some faiths that acceptance of a particular religious metaphysic is necessary for salvation**, and non-acceptance thereof is heinous sin meriting eternal punishment in hell (p. 28).
- (iii) **Heresy-hunting, the favourite game of many religions, is singularly absent from Hinduism** (p. 28).
- (iv) **The intolerance of narrow monotheism is written in letters of blood** across the history of man from the time when first the tribes of Israel burst into the land of Canaan. The worshippers of the one jealous God are egged on to **aggressive wars against people of alien cults**. They invoke **divine sanction for the cruelties** inflicted on the conquered. **The spirit of old Israel is inherited by Christianity and Islam** (p. 40).
- (v) **Wars of religion** which are the outcome of fanaticism that prompts and justifies the extermination of aliens of different creeds **were practically unknown in Hindu India** (p. 55).
- (vi) Hinduism insists not on religious conformity but on a spiritual and ethical outlook in life (p. 55).

Can we brand Prof. Radhakrishnan, late President of India, as a communal fanatic and ourselves as secular nationalists? What is the study we have made beyond parrot-like talking of 'secularism, secularism' on public platforms? Have we cared to understand past history and current events? Do the events of history just occur out of the blue? We have to base our policies on understanding and reason.

APPENDIX

Senate Joint Resolution 165

97th Congress 2nd Session

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES **April 5, 1982**

Passed the Senate March 31 (legislative day, February 22), 1982. Attest: William F. Hildebrand, Secretary.

Authorizing and requesting the President to proclaim 1983 as the 'Year of the Bible'.

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Presidential Documents

Federal Register

Vol. 48, No. 26

Monday, February 7, 1983

Title 3 - Proclamation 5018 of February 3, 1983 The President YEAR OF THE BIBLE, 1983 By the President of the United States of America A Proclamation

Of the many influences that have shaped the United States of America into a distinctive nation and people, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible.

Deep religious beliefs stemming from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible inspired many of the early settlers of our country, providing them with the strength, character, convictions, and faith necessary to withstand great hardship and danger in this new and rugged land. These shared beliefs helped forge a sense of common purpose among the widely dispersed colonies - a sense of community which laid the foundation for the spirit of nationhood that was to develop in later decades.

The Bible and its teachings helped form the basis for the Founding Fathers' abiding belief in the inalienable rights of the individual, rights which they found implicit in the Bible's teachings of the inherent worth and dignity of each individual. This same sense of man patterned the convictions of those who framed the English system of law inherited by our own nation, as well as the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

For centuries the Bible's emphasis on compassion and love for our neighbor has inspired institutional and governmental expressions of benevolent outreach such as private charity, the establishment of schools and hospitals, and the abolition of slavery.

Many of our greatest national leaders - among them Presidents Washington, Jackson, Lincoln, and Wilson - have recognized the influence of the Bible on our country's development. The plainspoken Andrew Jackson referred to the Bible as no less than 'the rock on which our Republic rests'. Today our beloved America and, indeed, the world, is facing a decade of enormous challenge. As a people we may well be tested as we have seldom, if ever, been tested before. We will need resources of spirit even more than resources of technology, education, and armaments. There could be no more

fitting moment than now to reflect with gratitude, humility, and urgency upon the wisdom revealed to us in the writing that Abraham Lincoln called ‘the best gift God has ever given to man’. But for it we could not know right from wrong.

The Congress of the United States, in recognition of the unique contribution of the Bible in shaping the history and character of this nation, and so may of its citizens, has by Senate Joint Resolution 165 authorized and requested the President to designate the year 1983 as the ‘Year of the Bible’.

Federal Register/Vol. 48, No. 26 /Monday, February 7, 1983

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NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, in recognition of the contributions and influence of the Bible on our Republic and our people, do hereby proclaim 1983 the Year of the Bible in the United States. I encourage all citizens, each in his or her own way, to reexamine and rediscover its priceless and timeless message.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

sd.

RONALD REAGAN

[FR Doc. 82-31372 Filed 11-12-82; 11:15 am]

Billing code 3195-01-M

3. Deep Chandra Awasthi⁶

At the very outset I would like to say that the eight formulations popularised by Sangh Parivar in recent years as stated, is not the whole fact. There may be even some more such formulations put forth by individuals as social hypothesis yet to be put to tests before being accepted as useful practices. The most that can be said is that the Sangh Parivar may also be in a mood to carry out some such tests.

As for the second document which deals with ‘Sarva Panth Samādar Manch’, I do not find any mention of EQUAL in it, as alleged. The honour is to be extended to ‘all ways of worship’ and nothing more (i.e. not ghetto mentality and hatred to all others etc.). I would request Voice of India to deal with this sensitive issue cautiously in the National interest (not secular, of course) and refer to the real intent of such moves of Sangh Parivar or some individuals as the case may be.

I share the two comments of Voice of India except the words ‘Muslims have become as aggressive and intransigent as during pre-partition period’ (it should be ‘They have since become more aggressive’ etc.) and ‘Now leaders of Sangh Parvar look like following the same path’. I feel they have yet not decided to commit suicide.

My feelings on the two documents are attached.

FIRST DOCUMENT

Dr. Shreerang Godbole’s anxiety and his comments offered at Pune Seminar as well as his letter to Sri K.S. Sudarshan are an alarm to all Hindus to seriously ponder over the issues in question. And I think they will. Hindus are thankful to him for the alarm.

1. The rejection of efforts of Quraiysh by Mohammad and the destruction of idols and pictures in Kaba by him is not enough to force Hindus to leave their own liberal and comprehensive Hindu view of life. We have to keep in mind that certain Arya Samajees are wildly critical to idol-worship and Sanatan Dharma itself. If someone is narrow and not co-operative, we will have to do something to let him become a sharer of humanity in general because ultimately true humanism is Hinduism.
2. ‘All religions lead to God’ is in fact a wrong saying. Religion is one like God is one. The paths leading to God may be several. They definitely are not equal from all the angles. Some of these may even be misleading. We should try to block and renounce such routes but with a Caution. Any Hurried action may cause, not only a confusion but may harm us in another way. Here again the word EQUAL has been stressed upon by Dr. Godbole which is not there in the basic reference.

⁶ The writer is from Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

3. ‘Islam is good Muslims are bad.’ In my opinion we should not waste time on this particular point. Muslims are not going to renounce Islam specially when Hindus or Dr. Godbole say that.
4. ‘The Muslims, if told of their common ancestry, will unite with Hindus’ is not necessary but there is no harm to tell them so. One would not be wrong if he tries to find out a possibility of a change in them. We can accept such harmless trial and error efforts.
5. Congress used Muslims or Muslims used Congress: Why aim at two extremes only? I feel the Congress and Muslims did not follow one way traffic. Their interests especially since 1947 were mutual. Now the Muslims have become well-practised in political manoeuvring. And thus today at least the point that Dr. Godbole has put forth has a considerable weight. Their basic anti-Hindu view has emerged as anti-BJP stand in Indian politics. In such a situation, no part of Indian population (not even infiltrators) can be deprived of their right to vote, none of them can be consigned to sea. And Hindus remaining constantly divided, unconscious of impending dangers to their very survival, the need to soften the attitude of Muslims, to turn their direction towards the national fold by softer means seems imperative; we cannot stop the ball from bouncing if struck too hard on the floor.
6. Discussion of Sufis has little to do in dealing with the Muslim Problem.
7. Having better knowledge of their so-called holy books, Muslim leaders (including Mallas) no doubt are responsible for the Ghetto mentality of Muslims. These leaders get inspiration and energy from their holy books. However, the effect of disruptive and separatist preachings of such books and leaders is gradually fading, though very slowly.
8. ‘Namaz offered on a disputed site is not acceptable to Allah’. While we can neither confirm nor deny this, even if there are any such instructions anywhere, Muslims would not follow them. They follow only what is of advantage to them as Muslims and not as human beings.

SECOND DOCUMENT

“There are encouraging signs that the foundations of Islam are showing cracks; many Muslims have begun to question the basic premises of Islam. Islam as an ideology is bound to become a museum piece”, is just an over-optimistic expression of Dr. Godbole.

Dr. Godbole is however closest to fact in saying that “the Quran, Hadis, Sunnah all cultivate an exclusivist, separatist, imperialist political mind-set of its adherents”. But similarity with Islam of other groups like Marxism etc., does not have a similar bearing on Hindus for diversified reasons. Had such other groups been a problem to Hindus just as Muslims are, Hindus would not have neglected them. It is unuseful to engage one-self on different issues just in a geometrical manner, which are not face to face today or ever in the close future.

No doubt the Muslims of India are the greatest victims of Islam and better they are weaned from the Islamic ideology, but they have since definitely turned as oppressors of non-Muslims. None can aim at Muslims without getting in touch with them. None can preach a ‘Sarva Panth Chikitsā’ (including the Muslims) because they are not going to listen to such preachings.

I am not interested in scanning the literal meanings of SARVA PANTH SAMBHĀV or SAMĀDAR but some platform seems necessary where adherent of all Panths should have an opportunity to discuss the values of their respective Panths, compare with one another, add or delete, accept or renounce the one that was adhered to in ignorance so far.

I would like to explain my position with regard to the word ‘SAMĀDAR’. This word is SAM+ĀDAR which means just ĀDAR in a more sophisticated form. It stands for ‘a reasonable respect’ and not for EQUAL respect. It is widely used in Sanskrit and Hindi for reasonable respect. Dr. Godbole has not interpreted the word correctly.

In the footnote regarding, ‘Parāvartana’, Dr. Godbole has again used the word EQUAL which is just disturbing. This word remaining there, Hindus will be, I am sure, in full agreement with Dr. Godbole on the futility of ‘Parāvartana’.

4. P. N. Awasthi⁷

I have gone through both the letters written by a Pune Swayamsevak for the RSS organisation. The issue pointed out in the letters is quite genuine and crucial, particularly after the formation of Pakistan and Bangla Desh. We had the same Constitution before also, but partition could not be prevented in spite of the sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi - showering liberties on a people bent on separation. Retaining the same Constitution automatically invites the same happenings repeatedly. If this is really intended, at least after the partition the country should have been named as 'Secularistan' or 'Sam Dharmastan' or something like that to indicate its proper nature. If this was put to vote people would have known what they were preferring. But calling it 'India' and 'Hindustan' with a permanent policy of strangulating the original inhabitants of this land - forced to be recognised by the foreign identification 'Hindus' - who did not convert, in spite of all the atrocities, to recently originated religions, born in the places once under the umbrella of the culture and civilization of this land, has confused the people.

I have heard the debate in Parliament when BJP could not prove its majority. The people talking there were all bound by the Indian Constitution. But there were quite a good number talking of India not as one Nation but as multi-nation. More vocal were those pleading for disunity and disintegration. They were keen to show their separateness. They were the representatives of Indian Nation, Indian Constitution! If expression and toleration of all this is the speciality of our Constitution then divisions must be our glorious future.

I am a freedom fighter, and I have painfully seen four chunks of my Motherland falling apart and now called as foreign. The present map of India is incomplete in my eyes, a pain to my eyes such as can never be realised by the younger generation.

The names given to us are all from those who separated from us. Our trouble is that we still harbour our original spirit, and those calling themselves 'Others' harbour the opposite - their original spirit.

It is under such diagonally opposite psychologies that emergence of a common totality - the feel of a Nation - has become impossible. But it is to be noted, this all is away from actual living conditions. This is mental and is created by separatist politicians. None of us can annihilate the other. But the other side cannot be overlooked. The so-called minorities in this country are a problem on account of their narrow vision, hostile philosophies and attitudes, and irrational fanaticism. As against this, the philosophy and history of the majority of this land has constantly proved its capacity to sustain the society. It is, therefore, necessary that erosion of the base of this majority is prevented, broadened, and the whole is consolidated. Hatred-based religions and their followers cannot be appeased or satisfied because their survival means the non-survival of others.

I am concerned with RSS only through newspapers. I think it is not a political organisation. I

⁷ The writer is a Freedom Fighter living in Mumbai.

believe it has tried to create self-confidence in the people of this country who are the original inhabitants having not converted to any prophet-based religion. They have quite a wide field for themselves. They have no reason to please those who are bent upon being recognised as ‘Others’ - outsiders. Even from political angle it is the solidarity of the majority that matters rather than help from ‘Others’.

In all organisations, there are always different trends. It all depends on the character, knowledge, experience and outlook of the individuals of the organisation. The commonness of the objectives becomes thinner and thinner as these varieties increase. Somehow our culture is habituated to openness and liberties. In the West, it is the opposite in the name of etiquette and discipline.

I remember that in the earlier Congress there were people like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Purushottam Das Tandon and many others who knew Sanskrit, ancient treatises etc., and had different depths of thinking. They had a different image of independence. The wave of Communism swept all those educated in the West, on account of absence of basic moorings on home stuff. The RSS also might be having problems, but if the common wall of objectives is allowed to erode the edifice is bound to fall apart. This in particular should be realised by those creating diversions. They have to see whether they are constructive.

5. S. K. Balasubramanian⁸

You have performed a service by circulating the note of Dr. Shreerang Godbole. The note raises pertinent questions about the usefulness of the movement for equality amongst religions as presently conceived by the RSS leadership. His observations are also relevant at the international level.

People who ask Hindus to treat all religions equally are barking up the wrong tree. Pluralism in faith is part of the baggage that every Hindu carries from cradle to grave. But genuine equality is a two-way street, and all parties should subscribe to certain commonalities in a sincere manner. I suggest the following steps:

I. *At the National Level:*

- i. To promote true secularism all voters should affirm their faith in it in writing and also subscribe to the equality of all religions. Respect for all religions should be affirmed. Those who refuse to do so should be disenfranchised.
- ii. All marriages should be registered and should be subject to civil suit.
- iii. All religious schools should have an approved minimum modern curriculum.
- iv. No religious school should be given state grants.
- v. Any religious school asking for state support should include a minimum programme of teaching other religions.
- vi. No book, however offensive it is claimed to be by religious groups, should be banned. All bans in existence should be lifted.

II. *At the International Level:*

- i. We should lobby for full religious equality in all countries. It should be part of the human rights.
- ii. Citizens from countries with exclusive religions should not be allowed to settle in India, unless they declare their faith in religious equality and affirm that they will not cause offence to the sentiments of the locals.
- iii. Indian citizens should not be allowed to marry citizens of countries that do not subscribe to the equality of all religions. If they insist on such marriage, they should be asked to renounce their Indian citizenship and visiting or visa rights.
- iv. Countries which do not subscribe to the equality of all religions should not be allowed to contribute funds to NGO's or social and religious bodies. Such a ban was in force against the Union of South Africa in the past because of its apartheid policy. It should be extended to cover religious exclusivism.

⁸ The writer is from Pune in Maharashtra.

6. Abhas Chatterjee⁹

In the hierarchy of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha, Dr. Shreerang Godbole is only a *Swayamsevak*. One wishes he was the *Sarsanghchālak* or the *Sarkaryavāh*. For, the ideological clarity, historical perception, understanding of national issues and intellectual awareness that he has exhibited in his two short write-ups, have been so sadly lacking in the top-brass of the organisation.

The RSS was started by its illustrious founder Dr. K.B. Hedgewar because of his prime conviction that Mahatma Gandhi's efforts during the Khilafat agitation to coalesce Hindu and Muslim national aspirations into one, were misplaced and futile. Dr. Hedgewar had realized that Hindus had the right as well as need to pursue their national interests in their own homeland. He correctly perceived that Muslim intransigence born out of their loyalty to an alien culture and ex-ruler syndrome and their consequent separatist demand, were bound to come in conflict with Hindu national aspirations.

Dr. Hedgewar's perception was well-founded on a millennium of history and authorities like Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda.¹⁰ He tried to organize Hindus into a dedicated, disciplined force which would acquire the strength to defend Hindu interests.

After 72 years, the organisation continues to adhere to the external symbiosis of a Hindu spirit: a saffron flag, an invocation to *Bhāratamātā*, and annual *guru-dakshinā* offerings. It describes India in its anthem as *Hindubhoomi* (the land of the Hindus) and her people as *Hindu-rāshtrāṅgabhūtāḥ* (an embodiment of the Hindu nation).

Secularists of every hue also keep proclaiming the RSS to be a radical militant Hindu organisation and a majority of the Hindu society appears to believe so.

But conscious, perceptive Hindus cannot but see that the RSS has proved a paper-tiger. All its bombastic pronouncements have been 'sound and fury signifying nothing'. Whether on Ayodhya or on Kashmir, on Article 30 or Article 370, on infiltration of Bangladeshi Muslims or enactment of common civil laws, on Sanskrit or Urdu, on *Vande Mātaram* or cow-slaughter - the RSS has always taken a step forward only to take two steps backwards. Rather, it has made one appropriate noise and then retreated into its hole. On no issue has the RSS been able so far to mount a campaign

⁹ The writer became well-known when as an IAS officer in Bihar he protested strongly and loudly against politicians interfering in administration and bullying the bureaucrats for bending laws in their favour. Finally, he resigned in utter disgust at the doings of Laloo Yadav and his gang. His letter of resignation is a classic, particularly in respect of Indian secularism perverting India's political parlance. He has now settled down at Ranchi in Bihar and is actively engaged in social welfare activities. His book, *The Concept of Hindu Nation*, was published by Voice of India in 1995. The Hindi version of this book has been brought out in 1996.

¹⁰ Shri Aurobindo said in 1923: "I am sorry they are making a fetish of this Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no use ignoring facts; some day the Hindus may have to fight the Muslims and they must prepare for it. Hindu-Muslim unity should not mean the subjection of the Hindus. Every time the mildness of the Hindu has given way. The best solution would be to allow Hindus to organize themselves and the Hindu-Muslim unity would take care of itself, it would automatically solve the problem. Otherwise we are lulled into a false sense of satisfaction that we have solved a difficult problem when in fact we have only shelved it." While framing the Rules and Regulations of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Swami Vivekananda had written in 1897-98: "For whoever goes out of the Hindu religion is not only lost to us, but also we have in him one more enemy. It is well-known in history what great harm was done during the Muslim regime by the renegades who became enemies and destroyed their own hearth and home" (Ch. Plan of Work for India, Rule 15).

resulting in successful protection of Hindu causes.

India's Secularist rulers have been relentlessly undermining Hindu interests, Hindu solidarity and Hindu pride. Their laws, policies and programmes are invariably meant to help Islam make further inroads into India. The ground has been systematically eroded from under Hindu feet without any worthwhile resistance from any Hindu organisation, including the RSS.

On issue after issue, the RSS starts with a roar, then shrinks into a whimper, then grovels and finally gives up, defeated but careful to save its face by inventing excuses.

Dr. Shreerang Godbole has pinpointed the basic cause of this pathetic failure of the organisation, viz. ideological confusion vis-à-vis Islam. Lack of a clear ideological vision is the hurdle on which the RSS flounders again and again.

Hindu Ideological Vision

An organisation - be it the RSS or any other - that really wishes to lead the Hindu society rather than merely pretending to do so or politicking to put one of its front organisations into power, must first develop a clear national vision.

1. The Hindus are a nation by themselves. India is their homeland. Sanātana Dharma is their nationality. It is legitimate for Hindus to try and establish a polity based on their nationality. It is legitimate for them to uphold their national culture, assert their collective rights, and regain control of their holy places and institutions. It is legitimate for them to establish a State that would give pride of place to their own nationality, its heritage and its symbols, to the exclusion of all others.
2. Islam is not a religion, but an imperialist political doctrine. It is certainly not dharma. A true follower of Islam cannot but be treading a path that Hindu thought would consider adharma. It is a lethal doctrine that has done much damage to humanity and will surely do more as long as it survives.
3. It is a wrong nation that the basic tenets of Islam are good or that bigotry, fanaticism, treachery, brutality etc. are subsequent accretions to it. It is not correct that Islam preaches or permits any form of brotherhood with non-believers.
4. Concepts like Zimmi, Kafir and Jihad are basic to Islam and cannot be changed as long as the creed survives. Muhammad's doctrine is like a seamless garment from which not even a single thread can be pulled out without causing disintegration of the whole.
5. All the evils we see in Islam today - terrorism, mob-violence, intolerance, fanaticism, disloyalty to motherland etc. - spring directly out of the Quran and the Hadis. From its very birth, Islam has rested and grown on these planks. They are sanctified by Allah's words and The Prophet's own example. If jihad, kafir-slaughter, idol-breaking, revenge-killing etc. are discarded, nothing would remain of Islam.
6. Islam cannot by any stretch of imagination be regarded as a part of India's national heritage or culture. Sanātana Dharma and Islam are diametrically opposite views of the universe,

- divinity and human soul. The two cannot be fused or harmonised into one or even made to co-exist peacefully without destroying one or the other.
7. Islam is and shall remain, for the Hindus, an anti-culture. It is an enemy culture, a parasite culture. It runs directly against everything that the nationality of the Hindus stands for. Attempts at glorifying Islam, writing apologetics about it, whitewashing its crimes, and painting a benign face of it, are misguided follies.
 8. A distinction must be made between Muslims and Islam. The two are not identical. In fact, Islam is the culprit, the Muslims its victims. Islam holds the Muslims prisoners to a life of hatred, bigotry, intellectual slavery and unspirituality. It dooms them to a life of violence, treachery, carnality and obnoxious ritualities.
 9. A Muslim's loyalty to Islam is because of his failure to appreciate that he is its victim. A Hindu therefore need have no particular respect for that loyalty. Islam is the disease, Muslim is the diseased. Islam is the drug, Muslim is the addict. A Muslim's fondness for Islam deserves no more consideration than does an addict's attachment to his favourite drug.
 10. People who are Muslims today have the same innate human goodness in them as others. But this goodness is muzzled by the malevolent teachings of Islam. If an individual can be brought out of the addiction to Islam, he may become a tolerant, harmonious human being again.
 11. It is true that Indian Muslims of today are largely descendants of Hindu converts. It is also true that the Hindu ancestors of many of them had belonged to lower castes. But it is not true that lower-caste Hindus voluntarily converted to Islam on account of oppression by other Hindus. Almost every conversion was by the choice between the Islam and death, by arson, rape and plunder, by a hundred legal, economic and social discriminations, by the burden of jizia, and oppression of every kind.
 12. It was natural that the poorest and weakest sections of Hindu society succumbed most to this oppression. This explains why a larger proportion of lowest classes of Hindus (barring exceptions like the Rajputs) are in the fold of Islam today.
 13. We ought not therefore bear any animosity against Muslims of undivided India (*Bhāratavarsha*). They are our own people, the progeny in fact of the weakest segments of our society who could not withstand Islamic oppression or hold on to their nationality.
 14. But these people have been alienated from us, from their motherland, from their nationality and ancestral culture, all because of just one evil influence - Islam. If they are rescued from that influence they can become harmonious members of the family again. It is our duty to help them know how false and diabolical is the creed of Muhammad, how it is holding them prisoner, and how it deserves not their loyalty but their contempt.
 15. Prophetic monotheism such as Islam and Christianity has promoted a world-view that has been hastening mankind to its doom. This world-view regards God as (creator but) external to universe, Nature as devoid of any holiness or divinity, the animal and plant world as mere objects of gratification of man who alone is made 'after God's image', and the present life to be our only life till the day of Last Judgement. It has led humanity to an over-exploitative, non-conservationist materialistic consumerism.

16. The monotheistic notion that only the ‘faithful’ are God’s/Allah’s/Jehova’s favourite children and that the rest of humanity is an abomination deserving annihilation, has smeared the world with hatred, warfare, persecution and bloodshed.
17. To save itself from disharmony with Nature and discord within human society, the world today needs the catholic vision of the Sanātana Dharma, the light of its yogic spirituality, the succour of its pluralism.
18. History has therefore placed a twin responsibility on the shoulders of the Hindus - to expose Islam, and to spread the light of Hindu spirituality.

No other nation has suffered so much from Islam for so long without being overwhelmed by it, lost so many of its people to that creed yet survived in its original nationality. No other nation has such empyrean spiritual traditions with which to evaluate Islam and study its theology and practice. No other nation still remains a land of Sanātana Dharma yet holds so many Islam-convert descendants in its homeland. If Hindus don’t spread knowledge about Islam, who would?

No other nation possesses the unique spiritual heritage that Hindus do. The light of yogic spirituality and quest for Truth are unique gifts of Hindu rishis to human civilization which we have to give to the world. This nation has to bring to the world the message of tolerance and harmony, dharma and spirituality, renunciation and service by spreading the Sanātana Dharma. A Hindu, who denies himself this role even a hundred years after Swami Vivekananda and keeps deluding himself by the notion of a ‘composite Hindu-Muslim national culture’, is a sadly misguided soul.

The Sangh Parivar lacks the Vision

The RSS has obviously failed to develop this correct ideological vision. The anxiety that the top leadership of the Sangh Parivar displays to ‘assure Muslims’ that ‘we are not against them’, ‘to bring Muslims into its fold’, to ‘start a dialogue’ with Muslim leaders, to secure ‘a gesture from Muslims’, to arrive at ‘an amicable solution acceptable to Muslims’ and so on, leaves little scope for doubt on this score. The RSS claims to be protector of Hindu interests, but keeps betraying utmost eagerness to avoid attacking the main threat to these interests, viz. the tenets of Islamic theology. The BJP leaves no stone unturned to become ‘acceptable’ to Muslims. Its leaders thank Muslims for their votes after getting kicked by them on its back. The VHP assures the Muslims that ‘we do not demand the return of the thousands of places of worship that have been forcibly replaced with mosques’ and requests them to ‘recognize the right of the Hindu society’ to only three holy Hindu sites. Leaders of the Sangh Parivar make every effort, even at the cost of distorting history, to project Islamic rule as a period of peaceful coexistence of Muslims with Hindus. “We do not like to think of our Muslim Compatriots as heirs and followers of such invaders and tyrants,” says the RSS and wants Muslims to ‘voluntarily hand over’ Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi to Hindus.

Ceaseless efforts to project a benign face of Islam, glorifying the so-called Sufi saints¹¹, going ga-ga

¹¹ It is well-known that most of the Sufis were fanatic Muslims, they acted as ‘eyes and ears of the Islamic army’, and went places ahead of the latter and gathered intelligence. They persuaded Muslim rulers to destroy Hindu shrines and build mosques on them. The most hailed of the Sufis, Muin-ud-din Chishti had his dargah built after destroying a Shiva temple atop the Ajmer hill. Another Sufi, Amir Khusro’s gleeful description of the destruction of the Somanath jyotirlinga, and his comment that ‘Hindu women used to rub their vaginas on the lingam’ should tell what stuff these Sufis were made of.

over ‘secular’ Muslims spotted by them, requesting Muslims ‘to separate religion from politics’, seeking their ‘co-operation in modernizing Muslim society’, finding justification from tenets of Islam in support of Hindu demands (Quran does not require Muslims to slaughter cows for sacrifice, Namaz is not permitted on ‘disputed’ sites and so on)¹² proves beyond doubt that the Sangh Parivar lacks clarity of national vision. It has imbibed enough of the poison of Nehruvian Secularism to believe that no political movement is legitimate in India unless it enjoys the approbation of Muslims. Like the Congress since 1916, the RSS has also mentally accepted the Muslim right of veto on Hindu politics.

Instead of developing the correct historical perception that Hindu-Muslim conflict is basically a clash between two anti-polar civilizations, and that Hindus have legitimate national interests to pursue without bothering about Muslim reaction, the Sangh Parivar has got into the familiar secularist trap of seeking Muslim support for a Hindu cause.

The RSS obviously does not realize that this is like fighting a war with the enemy’s approval. Its predecessor, the Indian National Congress, had tried this and failed (in spite of the best efforts of no less a man than Mahatma Gandhi) before 1947, and the Sangh Parivar is equally doomed to failure.

The Muslim Vote-Bank

Muslims are simply amused when the RSS shows sympathetic concern over their being vote-banks of the Congress. For, the Muslims know that vote-banking is the main pillar of their political strength. Ability to exercise a collective voting power, loosely referred to as a vote-bank, has given Muslims a political leverage far beyond what is deserved by their percentage in the population of India. Muslims have been a political community from the very beginning and are politically and communally conscious by tradition. This consciousness about what they perceive as their communal interest is reflected in India through their voting as a community.

Muslims are 12% of India’s population but command 14-15% of her votes because, unlike Hindus, they get themselves registered as voters during revision of electoral rolls not only exhaustively but also excessively (by duplication of names, exaggeration of age, fictitious additions etc.). As a proportion of valid votes polled in an election, the Muslim share is still higher at 16-18% because a much higher percentage of Muslims exercise their franchise than Hindus. On top of this, they generally vote collectively according to some definite plan decided in advance which they trust would serve their communal interests.¹³

By contrast, Hindus command over 80% of Indian votes, but are unable to form a vote-bank

¹² The presumptions are not true. The Quran does not exclude cows from among animals that may be slaughtered for sacrifice, certainly no ‘kafir’ site, temple or no temple, is barred from Muslim take-over. In fact, Islam believes all land on earth to rightfully belong to Muslims as per Allah’s desire and a kafir enjoying a land is a squatter anyway. So there can never be a ‘disputed’ land between Islam and the Kafirs. Forcibly taking over kafir land, destroying their temples, and erecting houses of Allah thereon are in fact highly commanded virtuous acts in Islam. Prophet Muhammad himself did it at Kaaba and then at scores of other places in Arabia.

¹³ During preparation of photo-identity cards in T.N. Seshan’s time as Chief Election Commissioner (1995) it was noticed all over Bihar that amongst Hindu voters, hardly 45-50% people got themselves photographed (or their cards made) whereas among Muslims the figure was above 90%. In any typical polling booth on an election day, Muslim voters in the queue far exceed their proportion in the voters’ list. Exit poll would also show that most of them had voted for the same candidate.

because, owing to inadequate political consciousness and lack of perception of community interests, they are unable to vote as a community.

The combined effect of these contrasting responses of the two communities leads to a democratic paradox in India. Elections generally end in results that accord with the wishes of the 12% Muslims while 85% Hindus fail to bring about a power-structure that would be favourable to them.

The existence of a Muslim vote-bank is thus a recognition of their political strength. Muslims have used their collective voting power to blackmail political parties (including BJP) into submission and forced them to toe pro-Islam lines. Far from being used by parties as the RSS imagines, Muslims have successfully managed to hold political persons and parties to ransom.

Muslims have never allowed a political party to take them for granted. Instead, they have dictated terms to parties and their candidates, dictated national policies and held sway over the course of enactment and operation of laws in India to ‘carry on the unfinished agenda’ laid down by the Quran and the Suanah. Muslim bargaining with their vote-bank power is simple. Whoever, as a candidate and/or a party, would commit himself to further Islamic interests in the country - keeping Kashmir separated from the rest of India, turning a blind eye to infiltration from Bangladesh, allowing Ulemaic institutions to shelter ISI agents to carry out espionage and subversion, repealing TADA, promoting Islamic theology in the name of minority education, promoting Urdu and suppressing Sanskrit, denouncing the notion of having a uniform civil code in the country, allowing Islam to retain its hold over usurped holy sites of Hindus, spreading tentacles across the country through *tabligh* and so on - would be assured of bulk Muslim votes and consequent chances of electoral victory.

The RSS and its front organisation BJP have always been at the receiving end of the collective voting scourge of the Muslims. They cannot, therefore, help admitting that Muslim vote-bank functions in India, but ideological confusion makes them get a reverse image of things. They keep fancying that vote-banking is a sign of Muslim weakness, that party interests are served by Muslim vote-banks, and so on.

The acme of Muslim voting power was observed in U.P. in 1993 when they decided that their primary electoral goal was to counteract the nascent Hindu solidarity by defeating BJP in as many constituencies as possible, no matter who the eventual winner was. To achieve this goal, Muslims voted en bloc tactically in favour of the Congress in some constituencies and the Mulayam-Kansi combine in some others, depending on who had a better chance against the BJP.

This tactful exercise of voting prowess led to a stunning outcome suited to Islamic predilections - the BJP with 34% of the polled votes ended up with the same number of seats (176) as the Mulayam-Kansi combine which had got only 28% votes! The ruling power passed into the latter’s rabidly pro-Islamic hands.

Yet in its simple-minded ebullience, the RSS advises Muslims to stop being a vote-bank and offers to ‘*treat them as human beings*’. It only provokes derisive Muslim laughter.

Can there be greater self-delusion? We wonder.

Can all ‘Religions’ lead to God?

Inadequate insight into the contents of sacred Hindu texts have led many to misunderstand the spirit of catholicity and pluralism embodied in the Sanātana Dharma of the Hindus. The RSS seems to be no exception.

It is true that Sanātana Dharma believes that different paths may lead to God. Unlike the exclusivist claims of a creed of prophetic monotheism, which predicts eternal hell-fire for anyone who does not worship its own god, through its own prophet and according to the prescriptions of its own book, Hindu Dharma holds that *‘as rivers meandering through different courses lead to the same ocean, so humans following different paths according to their diverse natures, all lead, O Lord, to thee’*.

Hindu Dharma does not therefore brand or denounce all other traditions and religions as being ‘ways of the Devil’, kufr, heathenism, and so on.

But a path can lead to God only if it is followed in purity, devotion and Truth. The God of Hindu Dharma lives in the innermost recesses of man’s heart and finding God is essentially a matter of attaining spiritual upliftment which depends not on what he believes but what he does with his body, mind and consciousness. In Hindu Dharma, a person finds God by establishing a communion of his soul (*ātman*) with the Supreme Being when yogic spirituality has given him purity of body, perfect control of mind and a state of super-consciousness through devoted seeking of Self-Knowledge. Deep meditation or bhakti practised in perfect devotion and purification of inner self raises the yogi’s consciousness to its most luminous and intuitive state where his Self fuses with the Deity.

The Hindu proclamation that *‘different paths lead to God’* certainly does not mean that any and every crass act can lead to God simply by calling it ‘religion’. Sanātana Dharma makes ample distinction between dharma and adharma, between spiritual elevation and spiritual degradation. It is only along a path of dharma that one can achieve spiritual upliftment. Following a path of adharma of *tāmasika vrittis* (traits of darkness) or *āsurī vrittis* (demonic traits) can only lead a person away from the God of Sanātana Dharma. To suggest that adharma leads to God as much as dharma would indeed be a negation of the entire Hindu spiritual thought.

Some aggressive theologies like Islam have gained currency as ‘religions’. The secularist argument which RSS appears to have adopted is: Religion means dharma (in Hindi); Islam is a religion; dharma in all its forms leads to God; so Islam too must be leading to God.

Nothing could be more superficial or off the mark than this.

The point for the RSS to remember is this. God is a concept. And the concept is fundamentally different in a natural religion and in a prophetic monotheism. The God of the latter (i.e. Jehovah or Allah) who is like a tribal chief protecting his clan and expecting obedience from them, is endowed

with all sorts of human weaknesses, prejudices and ambitions. He is in a way a finite being living in a particular place (the paradise), jealous of other gods, and anxious to be worshipped. He favours those who approach him through a chosen intermediary but dislikes the rest of mankind and wants them destroyed; he gets angry and is revengeful, and would decide on the day of last judgement whom to take in heaven and whom to cast into hell.

This ‘God’ is not the same as the God (paramātman) of Sanātana Dharma who is an all-pervading cosmic intelligence (mahat) constantly evolving and devolving himself, sometimes manifesting himself in the form of this universe and sometimes absorbing the universe into himself, who is beyond time, space and cause-and-effect cycle, who alone is and who cannot be comprehended except by saying this is not he.¹⁴

The God of Sanātana Dharma cannot be achieved except through perfect yogic spirituality, through the observance of dharma - in any of its myriad forms - but certainly not through adharma.

Prophetic monotheism has no notion of the God of Sanātana Dharma. The sole aim of monotheistic theology like Islam is to prepare its adherents as a community to pursue some material goals in life and to reserve seats for them in paradise after the eventual doomsday. Even in paradise, the burden of Islamic theology is that the believer would enjoy everlasting carnal pleasure with beautiful houris and handsome youth, eat the finest food and drink the finest wine. However, as Allah also resides in paradise, the ‘believer’ there would have attained God in some sense.

Statements like ‘*all religions lead to God*’ are indeed nothing short of nonsense.

Making Jesus and Muhammad Hindu Gods

The RSS idea of including Jesus and Muhammad in Hindu pantheon to harmonize the followers of these prophets with Hindus is not just stale. It runs straight into the face of their exclusivist dogmas and centuries of history.

Even before Muhammad had fled to Medina, the Quraish of Mecca had offered to accept Muhammad and his Allah in their pantheon only if he would agree to retain at least their three main goddesses - Lāt, Manāt and Uzzā - as Allah’s daughters. Muhammad agreed and soon got a revelation from Allah sanctioning the compromise. Shortly afterwards, however, when his strong-arm deputies like Umar threatened to revolt on the issue, Allah’s messenger repudiated the agreement. He promptly got a fresh ‘revelation’ in which Allah told him that the three verses containing the earlier revelation had actually been a handiwork of Satan in the garb of angel Gabriel!¹⁵

¹⁴ Even the concept of piety and morality are different in Hindu Dharma and in Islam. Hindu morality is based on values that have been evolved over ages by rishis and savants as being helpful for inner purification and peace, harmony and cohesion in society. Islamic morality is based on externalities prescribed in the Quran and Hadis. If they say “don’t blow your right nose first” then it is immoral in Islam to blow the right nose first. In Islam, piety lies in ‘faith’ in the Prophet and the Book and conduct towards fellow-believers. In Hindu Dharma, piety involves spirituality.

¹⁵ These three verses were thereupon dropped from the Quran and came to be known as the Satanic Verses.

In the face of the exclusionist doctrine of Islam which permits no deviation from the notion that Allah is the only God, Muhammad is the only (final) Prophet, Quran is the only Book, which considers nothing to be a greater sin than ‘*adding partners to Allah*’ or worshipping idols or questioning Muhammad’s status, which places destruction of Kufr (Paganism) in the land of its visitation as the highest goal, it is juvenile to suggest that accommodating Allah on the pedestal of Hindu deities could melt the heart of Islam.

The tolerant Hindu society has in fact tried throughout to imagine - even in the face of terrible evidence to the contrary - that Allah is a benign god worthy of veneration. Hindu scholars went to the extent of writing an ‘Allopanishad’ in the 16th century. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is said by his followers to have taken to Muslim way of worship for a few days and have had a vision. Mahatma Gandhi kept singing ‘*Ishwar Allah tere nām*'.¹⁶ Temples of so many Hindu sects like Sai Samaj display the Islamic crescent moon and star on their meditation spot along with the Hindu Aum and the Christian cross. And if pictures of Allah have not become an object of worship in ordinary Hindu homes, it is because the pictures would have been surely greeted by murderous attack, violence and arson by Muslim mobs on the poor worshippers.

All the Hindus initiative to deify Muhammad has, however, had no effect on the Muslim's spirit of jihad against the kafir.

As for Jesus, he is by and large already included in Hindu pantheon. It is common in many Hindu homes that a picture of Jesus would share the pooja-shelf with other Gods and Goddesses. Hindu monastic orders like Yogada Satsanga Society (of Swami Yogananda) regard Jesus as an avatar and includes an invocation to him in their daily prayers. The Ramakrishna Mission accords him a high place and celebrates Christmas. The birthday of Jesus is an important annual festival in the calenders of the Divine Life Society and Sathya Sai Ashram as well.

That the simple-minded Hindus have adopted Jesus as an object of worship without caring to study the Bible or Christological literature or analysing the realities of his life and creed, is a different matter. What is relevant in the present context is that such accommodation has in no way induced any slackening in the missionary effort at conversions through propaganda, inducements and fraud of every kind.

It is time for Hindu leaders to realize that the boot is on the other foot. Making Jesus or Muhammad a Hindu God is unlikely to impress adherents of their creeds. They would, more probably, view such gestures as attempts to ‘*defile their faith*’ or ‘*spoil its purity*’. Such naive expressions of Hindu pluralism would perhaps only make it that much easier for these aggressive theologies to make further inroads into the lands of Hindu Dharma and culture and subvert them.

Muslim Attitude to Pagan Ancestry

We find RSS literature overflowing with appeals to Muslims’ good conscience. “We do not like to

¹⁶ Mahatma Gandhi's support of the Khilafat agitation had taken the form of putting copies of the Vedas and the Quran on the same throne taken out in a procession. Muslim theologians were furious over this ‘insult’ to the Book of Allah.

think of our Muslim compatriots as heirs and followers of such invaders and tyrants,” it says. It wants the Muslim community ‘to voluntarily make up for the huge massacres, temple destruction and swordpoint conversions which its earlier generations inflicted upon Hindu Society’. It says that “Indian Muslims should join themselves with Rama and not with Babar” and exhorts them “to rise to the occasion of their own free will”, and so on.

All this indicates a pair of notions:

1. If Muslims of India could remember that their ancestors were Hindus before conversion to Islam they would become loyal to Hindu nationality and heritage;
2. If Muslims of today are reminded how Muslims of yore (‘your ancestors’, in RSS language) persecuted Hindus, they would be full of remorse, shame and guilt-conscience and consequently develop a benign attitude towards Hindus.

Both of these notions are, unfortunately, foolish presumptions born out of inadequate knowledge of the tenets of Islam, its theology, its history and the examples set by its prophet in his *Sunnah* (practices).

The basic credo of Islam is that people who followed pre-Islamic Pagan religions were denizens of darkness (*jāhiliya*) and only those who forsake those cultures and surrender to Muhammad’s creed become Allah’s favourites. They alone are followers of the right path (*Dīn*) and are assured of places in paradise. Islam dictates a complete break from the past. There is no place in Islam for any empathy with one’s idol-worshipping (*mushrik*) ancestry. Idolators including Muslims’ ancestors are abominable creatures in the eyes of Allah who has ordained most terrible punishment for them in eternal hell-fire.

Muslims who kill their own kith and kin for the sake of their ‘faith’ are in fact glorified in the Quran. Muhammad specially commanded those of his followers who killed their own senior Pagan relatives, or expressed willingness to do so, in the Battle of Badr. Abu Talib, the tolerant Pagan uncle of Muhammad who had made it possible for the latter to preach his dogma by protecting him throughout from the anger of the Meccan Quraish, was decreed by Muhammad to land in hell merely because he chose to remain himself a Pagan till death. According to Muhammad even his mother Amina had her place reserved in hell because she had lived and died a Pagan. That the poor woman had died 34 years before Allah decided to start sending ‘revelations’ to her son and had no chance of embracing the ‘only true faith’, was of no consequence.

Destroying one’s Pagan past, and establishing Islam on Pagan lands are the most sacred duties enjoined by the Quran and Sunnah on a follower of Muhammad.

When a Muslim recalls how Muslims of yore (his ancestors or otherwise) had slaughtered kafirs, destroyed their temples, broken their deities, plundered their wealth, burnt their books, violated their women, and enslaved their children, he gets a sense of pride rather than of shame. For in doing so, they had acted in true spirit of jihad as per injunctions of Allah, in accordance with repeated exhortations of the Quran and examples of the Prophet cited in the Hadis, in short, as good pious Muslims firm in their faith.

A Muslim would consider these to be acts of valour rather than atrocities, courage rather than cruelty, virtue rather than vice. For jihad is the most sacred duty enjoined on the faithful by the Quran, and jihadic conduct the highest form of piety in Islam.

The RSS has only to note the unconcealed pride and glee with which a long chain of Muslim historians and 'holy' men, including Indian-born fellows like Amir Khusro, have described the death and destruction brought upon the Hindus, and how in the Muslim scale of honour, the gorier the record of his persecution, the higher the place of the persecutor. Ghaznavi, Timur and Aurangzeb are, therefore, still the greatest heroes of Muslims.

A vital truth has escaped the notice of the RSS. Muslims of Bhāratavarsha would start returning to Hindu fold only when they realize how obnoxious a doctrine Islam is, how false and fraudulent, how degrading and dehumanising, how unethical and superficial. History has bestowed a role on the Hindu nation - to help Muslims discover that Islam is not a religion at all but a political doctrine propounded to serve one man's imperialist ambitions, that the Quran embodies nothing but Muhammad's own thoughts expressed in words attributed to Allah but meant to serve his political and (occasionally) carnal ends, that terrorism and mob-violence have been the stock-in-trade of this doctrine from the day of its birth, that Islam is a prison-house that deprives them of their freedom of thought, powers of reasoning and qualms of conscience.

When, and only when, Muslims find out the reality about Muhammad and his creed, they would start walking out of Islam and feel proud to return to their ancestral culture.

It is not whether Muslims know they are descendants of converted Hindus. It is whether they are proud of that conversion or ashamed of it. Muslim mind cannot change by the knowledge (say) that they are descendants of children born of rapes committed by Muslim soldiers on hapless Hindu women. It would change when they start feeling ashamed of being products of such a barbaric theology.

Anwar Sheikh, for example, was a typical Muslim in 1947. He even killed three (Sikh) Hindus in the back-streets of Lahore during the post-partition riots and felt proud of performing a jihadic act. But once he saw through Muhammad, his creed, his book and his god (Allah), Sheikh not only discarded Islam with contempt but is now a committed scholar producing powerful literature and defiantly fighting the Islamic thought-police.

Salman Rushdie became what he is and exposed the real character of the 'revelations' in his *The Satanic Verses* not because he met an RSS man one morning who told him that his ancestors were Hindu. Rushdie did his deed because he had realized that the creed of The Apostle of Allah was a fake.

Taslima Nasreen is not Hindu. But she is no Muslim either. She ceased to be a Muslim not because she remembered her Hindu ancestry but because she was intellectually convinced that '*the Quran needs to be re-written*'.

No organisation can provide genuine nationalist leadership to Hindus unless it develops a conviction - and the courage to back it up - that Islam is the villain and its theology the scourge that has to be put in its proper place.

Sarva Panth Samādar?

The RSS has recently launched through one of its front organisations what it calls the ‘*Sarva Panth Samādar Manch*’.

Quite clearly, RSS bigwigs somehow felt uncomfortable with the secularists’ *sarva dharma samabhāva* slogan but could not quite make out what was really wrong with the concept and whether they should discard it outright. So they ended up changing two words in that slogan and retaining the concept with a slightly modified name!

How is RSS’s slogan any different from the secularists’ slogan? Both of them mean exactly the same thing. Namely, Sanātana Dharma (in its myriad forms and branches) is a religion, Islam and Christianity are also religions, the latter are therefore as worthy of respect as the former, Islam and Christianity should be regarded as much a part of our national heritage as the Sanātana Dharma, the Rigveda and Bhagvadgita can claim no more reverence than the Bible or the Quran, Jesus and Muhammad should get the same veneration from us as Shri Rama, Shri Krishna, Buddha, Mahavir or Nanak, we should regard Islam and Christianity as benign spiritual traditions like Sanātana Dharma, and so on.

The bewilderment of the RSS appears to have been caused by their failure to appreciate the meaning of ‘dharma’ or evaluate the monotheistic doctrines.

The fundamental principle of Hindu spiritual tradition is the contrasting between dharma and adharma. The Lord incarnates himself again and again to uphold dharma and destroy adharma; dharma leads to moksha, adharma to birth in lower orders (yonis), ‘*victory will be where dharma is*’, ‘*a mind enveloped by darkness (tāmasika buddhi) mistakes adharma for dharma*’. If anything can be considered a blasphemy in terms of Hindu spirituality, it is to equate dharma and adharma, to suggest that one should adopt *dharma-adharma-sambhāva*.

But sacred Hindu texts do not leave any room for confusion as to what constitutes dharma and what its antithesis. The Bhagvadgita (Ch. 16) for example describes fully what characterize dharma or daivî-sampad and what adharma or āsurî-sampad. Islam which preaches hatred, violence, aggression and plunder against the non-believers, which lauds slaughter, cruelty and retribution on grounds of difference in ‘faith’, which inculcates sectarianism in ‘God’s chosen people’ and contempt for other humans, which panders to the baser instincts of man to achieve power and wealth, which provides little for man’s spiritual upliftment - such a dogma cannot qualify as dharma as perceived in Hindu tradition. It is out and out adharma.

Putting dharma and adharma on the same pedestal by labelling them both as ‘panths’ and holding

such ‘panths’ in equal respect thus amounts to adopting a principle of dharma-adharma samabhāva, i.e. equality of respect for virtue and vice, righteous and unrighteous, good and evil. This would be ridiculous. It can only make a mockery of 5000 years of Indian spiritual thought. It cannot but sink the society - as it has done for the last 50 years - to the lowest depths of viciousness and moral bankruptcy.

Islam, the Source of Ghetto-Mentality

It is foolish to blame the Muslim leadership for the ghetto-mentality of their community. Muslims have a ghetto-mentality because Islam is a ghetto. It seeks to close the mind of its adherents against every breath of fresh air blowing from gardens of spirituality lying outside.

The whole basis of Islam is that Quran is the divinely revealed word of Allah which is exhaustive, immutable, eternal and universal. Nothing can be added to or taken away from it. “*When Allah and the Prophet have decided a matter for them, what say can the believers have in it?*” says the Quran (33:36).

If chemistry, astronomy, geography or bio-genetics prove anything which is contrary to the Quran (even that the earth moves round the sun), Islam demands that such knowledge should be shunned. Then there is the example of the Prophet whose opinion and conduct, whose sayings and practices on every issue are models for the believers, because he is considered ‘an ideal man’ sent by Allah. So the best that a Muslim can ever aspire to become is just another Muhammad with all his cruelty, causality, clannishness and bigotry.

Finally, Islam’s cardinal principle is that the kafirs are dirty creatures, objects of Allah’s hatred, whose wisdom is Devil’s mischief, whose shadow even would pollute a Muslim’s house. This persuades Muslims to withdraw themselves as far as possible from the learning, values, philosophies and company of kafirs.

Blocked thus from avenues of science, rationality and logic, adherents of Islam are reduced to frogs in the well. Suspicious of all outside influence, fearful of the light of knowledge, they grope in the darkness of Islam. The predicament of some Muslim leaders is understandable. Should they continue promoting ghettos, or risk their necks by discarding injunctions of the Quran and the Hadis?

Betrayal of the Ayodhya Movement

The ideological muddle of the RSS was starkly exposed by its ambivalent conduct of the Ayodhya movement.

It started by taking up the emotional nationalist urge of liberating the holy Hindu site of Ramajanmabhoomi (RJ) from alien occupation and restoring it to the Hindus. The call found spontaneous emotional response from Hindus. A clear national vision would have told the RSS that the Babri mosque had no business to stand on the RJ and its demolition was a rightful aspiration of the Hindu nation. But the RSS never developed this conviction. It soon started talking of ‘making a

new Rama temple on RJ instead of ‘liberating’ it. It diverted attention by making bricks, sanctifying them through worship (Rāma-shilā-poojan) and so on. It avoided facing the basic issue - no temple can be built unless the original site is liberated and restored to Hindus.

Soon the Sangh Parivar was taking recourse to new subterfuges. They said that the mosque was not a mosque at all but a temple (!), that they wanted to ‘renovate’ it and not pull it down, that they wanted to do so because it was a temple, and that it should be called a ‘*disputed structure*’ instead of Babri mosque and such other nonsense.

As time passed, the Sangh Parivar was hedging further. They said they wanted to build a temple on RJ but only by ‘*amicably shifting*’ the mosque. They talked of acquiring the site through legislation, building a temple without damaging the mosque, ‘*relocating*’ the mosque with respect and Muslim co-operation, making construction only on surrounding land (77 acres) and so on. Stalwarts of the Sangh Parivar were also giving undertakings in courts and political fora that they would protect the Babri mosque!

The President of the VHP proclaimed the nonsense that Babar was a tolerant ruler who did not demolish temples, that it was his general Mir Baqi who built the Babri mosque without Babar’s knowledge and that ‘*offering namaz on a disputed site is forbidden in Islam*’. The Sangh Parivar tried to fool the Muslims, and begged that RJ be handed over by Muslims as ‘a gesture of goodwill’.

But the Hindus still went with them.

When the fateful day of 6th December 1992 came, the Sangh Parivar was in a state of pathetic self-contradiction. The assemblage of Hindu youth fired with nationalist zeal was not prepared any more to play the RSS game of merry-go-round on RJ. As they started bringing down the offending structure, the RSS arrayed its volunteer corps who tried their best to resist the Hindus and protect the mosque! Luckily, they failed.

As Babar’s mosque was demolished, Hindus rejoiced while RSS stalwarts sat with sullen faces; Vajpayee cried, ‘**Satyānās kar diyā**’, the Sangh Parivar started hiding its face behind excuses. They disowned the act and the heroes who had performed it. They frowned at the spontaneous joy of Uma Bharati and Sadhvi Ritambhara. They all but apologized for it.

And that was the end of the Ayodhya movement. The Sangh Parivar simply dropped a movement which they had promised would be the greatest mass movement in human history. While RJ continued to remain in the hands of anti-Hindu secularists, the Sangh Parivar started bemoaning that the Rama Temple cannot be built till they capture political power in Delhi. They meekly agreed to surrender to a secularist judiciary the right to decide whether the RJ belonged to the Hindus at all.

The midstream jettisoning of the Ayodhya movement has been the most severe blow to Hindu interests since the Partition. It has demoralized Hindus, confused them and created doubts in their minds about the legitimacy of their aspirations. It has left the Hindu society even more directionless

and less self-confident than ever before. It has pushed the nascent Hindu movement back by almost a century. As the 20th century comes to a close, the Hindu nation finds itself pushed back to the position where it had stood almost 90 years ago on the eve of the partition of Bengal in 1905.

The RSS betrayal of the Hindu society was complete.

Intellectual Bankruptcy is the Bane of the RSS

Why has the RSS landed itself in such a pathetic hole?

The answer is straightforward - the organisation lacks an intellectual base. When Dr. Hedgewar laid stress on organisation in 1925, he may have been right. But his successors got so obsessed with saMgaThana(organisation) that they totally neglected scholarship and intellect. They forgot that ideology is the foundation of a political movement and scholarship and intellect are the bricks that make that foundation. Freedom of intellect was probably seen as an obstacle in the way of obedience and discipline (just as in Islam) and therefore detrimental to organisation.

RSS meetings generally include what they call a bauddhik (an intellectual discourse) and have bauddhik pramukhs at different levels to conduct them, but their lectures are generally quite hackneyed, superficial and uninspiring. More significantly, it is forbidden in the so-called intellectual sessions to ask questions at the end of the lectures.¹⁷

Suspicious of liberty of thought, the RSS thus produced a generation of ‘uneducated’ leadership - people who never cared to read either the Bible or the Quran and the Hadis or the life of Muhammad or the history of Islam or of Christianity. Neither did they try to study in depth the Hindu sacred literature. These leaders knew next to nothing either about Hinduism or about the prophetic monotheism, about the psyche that has guided this nation or its enemies, the ethical values that India stood for and those its invaders sought to impose on her. They lacked insight into India’s hoary history or the dimensions of her struggle against invading civilizations.

Hardly anything of notable scholarship has been produced by the RSS ‘bauddhik’ brigade. In 25 years of its existence the Deendayal Research Institute inspired by the Sangh has published hardly anything that can be called a work of solid Hindu scholarship. Guru Golwalkar’s *Bunch of Thoughts* makes critical references to the behaviour-pattern of present-day Muslims without showing any awareness of what forms their psyche and what role Islamic theology plays in this.

For the overwhelming majority in the Sangh Parivar, including most of its bigwigs, the intellectual equipment remains limited to some lay-man perceptions which are either too superficial to help formulate ideological convictions, or too much at variance with realities to help explain emerging events.

Unfortunately, while Dr. Hedgewar was pursuing his nationalist ideals during 1925-40, Gandhi’s

¹⁷ I know many swayamsevaks who feel quite frustrated by this prohibition. But the frustration has not found expression earlier than Dr. Godbole in such cogent form.

charisma had widespread appeal to Hindu sentiments. Majority of Hindus were swept off their feet and began to share his misguided vision of a composite Hindu-Muslim nationality. Torrents of contrary evidence were pouring in, but Hindus gullibly followed Gandhi's line.

Into the forties, Jawaharlal Nehru was providing an intellectual clothing to the Gandhian viewpoint. The RSS, suffering from intellectual impoverishment, was unable to counter the Gandhi-Nehru onslaught or equip the Hindus to reject its ideas. Instead, the Sangh was sucked into the thought-stream of a perverted secularism. Since then they have largely obeyed the secularist track-rules, except for making occasional noises to the contrary.

Loss of Ideology is Loss of Way

A part from Hindu society, the main loser from the ideological failure of the RSS has been the RSS (or the Sangh Parivar) itself. For all its boasting about being the largest voluntary organisation in the world (500,000 swayamsevaks, 40,000 shakhas and all that), the RSS is now virtually a dead institution unable to force the secularist system to bend to the Hindu viewpoint on a single issue - from Kashmir to Urdu, from infiltration to Vande Mātaram, from uniform civil code to cow-slaughter, from Mathura-Kashi to TADA. It is like a lifeless monster of enormous proportions rather than a throbbing little bee with a sting.

In the midst of hundreds of new *dals*, *vahinis*, *manches*, *gosthis* etc. floated by the Sangh and thousands of sachivs, pramukhs and upa-pramukhs and the like nominated therein, an utter lack of inner strength, conviction and commitment characterizes all its activities. Having seen the working of the VHP, Bajrang Dal, Vanavasi Kalyan Kendra and the like from close quarters, I found only a massive form without any content, a yawning void behind a lofty facade. Programmes are launched with fanfare, there is hectic activity to get media publicity, but the office-bearers merely go through the motions without any commitment, and the end-result is zero.

Talk to them in private, and you will know that the cadre of swayamsevaks is deeply frustrated. Bright idealistic young men who had sacrificed lucrative material careers and joined the Sangh out of genuine nationalist urge, feel cheated. What the Sangh is doing fails to touch their inner chords. Some of them get disillusioned and quit, others carry on with the rituals and wonder what it is all about.

In the absence of a solid ideological commitment to guide them, many Sangh office-bearers have been infected by Mandalism and Dalitism during the last 6 years. With the normal quota of petty jealousies and vested interests, RSS is making a career for them now.

Look at the shakhas of which RSS brags as running 40,000 across the country. The unpleasant truth is that, thanks to their unimaginative functioning, they now evoke little response in the minds of Hindu youth and not even 4 or 5 swayamsevaks attend an average shakha. Even the largest shakha in Bihar draws no more than a dozen. But the show goes on.

In December 1993, my son (18) used to go past an RSS shakha every morning. He always saw the

poor pracharak performing all by himself in front of his saffron flag. For a few days, an obese Sikh boy was seen working out with the pracharak obviously because the former's father thought the boy should lose some weight. Soon the boy was not to be seen again. Then came the climax. It was a bitterly cold, foggy morning. The grass was wet with dew and the sun was not yet up when my son passed by. He told me sadly what he had seen at the shakha. The saffron flag was up on the pole. The poor pracharak was again busy doing his usual drill by himself, while a shaggy street puppy stood there looking up at the pracharak's face and vigorously wagging its skimpy tail!

In another local shakha, the pracharak himself told me, some Mohammedan youths would defecate at night at the point where the saffron flag was to be erected. The pracharak would just clean the mess in the morning with a shovel, put up the flag again and start doing his acrobatics!

Organisations generally reach a stage when the organisation itself becomes more important than the idea it was supposed to promote. The vehicle becomes more important than the goal. The RSS too has reached that stage. Serving the interests of the Sangh Parivar now surely ranks higher than serving the Hindu nation. A tendency to weave a cocoon around itself is on the increase. Meet some RSS bigwigs, and you would find them talking about what happened in the Sangh meeting somewhere, how a family was drawn to it, how Guruji said what to whom and how Deorasji responded, how the Sangh Parivar is a well-knit family, and so on. An unwillingness to face the failures or to objectively discuss unpleasant realities, cannot be missed. On the contrary, point out the failures, and pat comes the reply, "*Aren't we alone doing something for the Hindus? Who else is doing anything at all?*"

Constant ambivalence, appeasement of Muslims and repeated self-contradictions has damaged the credibility of the RSS among thinking sections of the Hindu public. Specially after the RJ betrayal, Hindus have lost interest in the Sangh Parivar while the swayamsevaks have lost inspiration. It is no wonder that all their subsequent programmes - Swadeshi, Go-rakshā, Mathura-Kashi - have turned out to be damp squibs. They had started with roars, but all of them have ended in whimpers. BJP, the political front of the RSS, has by now been in power for varying periods in seven north Indian states. There has been nothing in the policies and actions of any of these Governments to indicate that they are ideologically different from Nehruvian Secularism. Before they had come to power, the Delhi BJP made much noise about presence of 3 lakh Bangladeshi Muslim infiltrators in the national capital and took credit for deportation of 127 of them, but once in power the Khurana Government totally forgot about the whole thing and talked of issuing green cards to the infiltrators! In Rajasthan, the Shekhawat government bestowed a lavish Rs. 6.7 crores on beautifying the dargah of Muin-ud-din Chishti at Ajmer, which had been built after demolishing hundreds of Hindu temples. Kalyan Singh in U.P. enhanced the hajj grant to twice the level at which Mulayam Yadav had kept it and retained Urdu as an official language. Patwa and Shanta Kumar did nothing that was even remotely Hindu.

But the cake certainly goes to A.B.Vajpayee's 13-day Government at the Centre in 1996. In order to appease pro-Islam elements, it dropped from its agenda items like scrapping of article 370, building the RJ temple, removing the discrimination against Hindus inherent in article 30 of the Constitution, and expelling infiltrators. It did not even appoint a Commission to study and draft a

Uniform Civil Code in pursuance of repeated specific directions from the Supreme Court.

That a party can be so shamelessly devoid of ideological commitment was a stunning revelation to many.

Failure of the RSS Movement: Disaster for the Hindu Nation

For the Hindu nation, failure of the RSS movement has been a veritable disaster. This Hindu national movement has hardly made any progress during the last 80 years. It has floundered again and again because its leaders lacked proper historical perspective and clarity of vision. With RSS failing to strike a chord in increasing number of Hindu minds, the nation is left leaderless as well as directionless. As already pointed out, midstream abandonment of the Ayodhya movement has so demoralized and confused the Hindu society as to push back its national resurgence spirit by almost a century. An emerging Hindu consciousness, a feeling of restlessness among thinking Hindus that was evident in the 1980s, has suffered a serious setback.

Worse still, only a tiny fraction of the Hindu society has the political perception to see that the Sangh Parivar is no less steeped in Nehruvian Secularism than the Congress. The majority continues to place its faith in the Parivar and feel that its interests are secure - notwithstanding evidence to the contrary - just as it had done in the Congress during 1930s and 1940s.

Secularists of every hue continue to spread the lore that RSS is a powerful, radical Hindu organisation, and most Hindus keep believing it. The secularist trick of thus lulling the Hindus into a false sense of complacency has proved quite successful. Just as Savarkar failed to get Hindus behind him because of Mahatma Gandhi, small pockets of wakeful Hindus are today unable to gather wider support because the public continues to believe that RSS is there to protect their interests.

The overall Hindu situation remains, consequently, a peculiar amalgam of frustration and smugness, demoralization and optimism.

Continued Hindu faith in the RSS has forestalled the emergence of a genuinely Hindu alternative, whereas the Sangh Privar has started imaging itself as the rightful guardian of the Hindu society and views the possible emergence of a 'competitor' with unease. At the same time, Hindus continue to be taken for granted and the ground continues to slip from under their feet, week after week, month after month, year after year. In the words of the Upanishad, the RSS acts as '**people who are ignorant but imagine themselves as wise and learned**', while the Hindu society under its care is reduced to '**blind men led by the blind**'.

With the breath of life almost out of the RSS, decomposition of its body may take a few years. Where does that leave the Hindu society at the close of the 20th century is the question to ponder.

7. G.C. Chaudhary¹⁸

Dr. Shreerang Godbole has actually given vent to his deep anguish which is gnawing at the heart and mind of the Hindu intelligentsia today. He has spoken THE TRUTH - may it be bitter.

I am writing these lines not only from my knowledge but from my experience and from what I have seen, and the events of recent past which I have lived and borne.

Muslims of India propounded the two nation theory purely on the basis of Islam, the only true religion. They claimed that they had a 'different' culture, tradition, language, living and that they could not co-exist in Hindu-dominated India. Jinnah declared, "*If the Congress wanted war, Indian Muslims will accept the offer unhesitatingly. We shall have India divided or India destroyed.*"

Muslims ultimately succeeded in partitioning the country gaining Pakistan. So what remained was naturally Hindusthan. But the majority of Muslim agitators who were from Bengal, Bihar and U.P., stayed back with their mental aberrations intact.

The fundamental tenet of Islam is hatred for all other faiths and destruction of all KAFIRS: for all religions except Islam are false, Darkness (Jahiliya). For Islam, civilization begins with Mohammad's messages received direct from Allah, the only true God. Islam recognises only one book, the Quran, and only one and the LAST messenger, Mohammad. The messages were deleted, substituted, and were sometimes received even from the SATAN, leading astray the message and the Messenger. Since Allah spoke for the last and all times to come, Islam brooks no change, addition, alteration, re-definition, or re-interpretation. It is a closed door. Every one not accepting the message, - even those who have not heard of it - is condemned to Hell Fire eternally. To annihilate the KAFIRS and destroy their places of worship is JEHAD, Holy War, with confirmed reservation in Heaven for those waging it.

These tenets are continuously being propagated by MUSLIMS, taught in minority schools - the Madarsas - and every Muslim child is brainwashed into this psyche. They want DARUL ISLAM. See the world map: India is the only KAFIRISTAN on this side of the globe, so grab it by any means whatsoever.

Hindus are complaisant; the so-called secular leaders are wooing the Muslim vote as if the history from 1885 is no guide. Muslims are ever demanding concessions and are getting them.

The Constitution of India is not applicable to Muslims. Article 44 envisages Uniform Civil Code. But Muslims are opposed to it. Article 25 is for reform of Hindu religious bodies only. While Hindus are subjected to continuous inroads into their religion, culture, tradition and usages by innumerable legislations, Muslims are exempt. They actually have a privileged status and they

¹⁸ The writer joined Bihar Labour Service in 1942 and retired as Joint Labour Commissioner in 1980. He worked as District President of the VHP in Madhubani, Bihar, from 1989 to 1992 when he resigned from the organisation in utter disgust. At present he is active as a member of the District Executive Committee of the BJP in Madhubani, where he lives.

demand more; they are insatiable.

Hindus do not need any intermediary to achieve God; they do not need sermons from the Macaulay-breed intellectuals and so-called secular leaders, for Sanatan Dharma, commonly called Hinduism, declares: EKAM SAD VIPRĀH BAHUDHĀ VADANTI - Truth is but one, propounded differently by various Teachers. This, however, does not apply to Islam for it teaches not God-realisation, but achievement of HEAVEN, and negates all other paths except the one propagated by Mohammad.

With this fundamental difference between Hinduism and Islam, where is place for SARVA DHARMA SAMABHĀV or SARVA PANTH SAMĀDAR? It is a slogan born out of ignorance of history and known facts. Everybody seems to preach to Hindus to bow down, to cower, to surrender to the Muslim might in the hope of gaining power and earn the distinction of being SECULAR.

Let facts speak. Though Gandhi proclaimed that India would be divided over his dead body, he succumbed to partition. Jinnah agreed to transfer of population - a very natural corollary to Pakistan - but the Congress did not, for it claimed to represent all communities. At the time of partition Hindu population in N.W.F.P., Baluchistan and Sindh was 8%, 12% and 25% respectively. All were driven out. In West Pakistan Hindus comprised 23%, now they are 3%, while in Bangladesh the 29% has come down to 12%. The Hindus who are still staying back have a life well described and documented in the book LAJJĀ; they virtually live in Hell - under constant terror.

The gradual decline of Hindu culture, religion and unity pained and inspired a sage, Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, to found R.S.S. on 27 September 1925 with five Swayamsevaks at Nagpur. The basis was DHARMA and SANSKRITI. The object was CHARITRA NIRMĀN and SHISHTA SAMĀJ - the building of a good society through building of individual character. Has the GOD FAILED? Has the policy been reversed?

Gandhi called R.S.S. '*a communal organisation with a totalitarian outlook*'. There is no democracy in the R.S.S., it is true. But men of the highest integrity sacrificed brilliant careers and joined the Sangh with a mission to organise the nation - an undivided nation and a powerful nation (RĀSHTRA). They unflinchingly worked for it. The R.S.S. delved into Indian history and discarded Negationism. One aspect of appeasement has been to negate the genocide, atrocities, conversions, destruction of temples and seats of culture and learning by the Muslim invaders and rulers which, to them, was JEHAD, Holy War. No nation negates its history. Only the other day the B.B.C. had a full report on the anniversary of the Nuremberg war crimes trials. The Japanese remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki every year. The Jews have recorded the atrocities perpetrated against them in various European countries. But the Ruling Class in India is prepared to negate, even falsify history.

There has been a slow but marked decline on physical and intellectual levels of R.S.S., specially the lower echelons. They are ignorant of or have not assimilated the basic tenets of R.S.S. The higher ups also pay routine visits, deliver lectures, and consider their duty accomplished. They seem to be less interested in their own organisation, but are very active in politics.

The B.J.P. which has its roots in Jana Sangh is also deviating. It has of late become more vote-conscious. Power seems to be the aim, the ultimate goal; means and principles can be ignored.

This is the picture of India today. Hindus, with one and only one geographical area for habitat, have reason to be concerned.

The framers of secularist SLOGANS should first read the Quran and the Biography of Mohammad to understand the Muslim psyche, thought process, religious tenets, injunctions and aims. They will then understand that Islam has no compromise with anything which is not as incorporated in the Quran. The need to change is for the Muslims. They are aware of the lust and weakness of Hindu secular politicians, and are playing a balancing game for gaining ascendancy. They are nobody's vote bank. All Hindus from the Kashmir Valley were driven out and no tears were shed by the secularists. Everybody is busy in winning over the Muslims.

It is high time that the Hindu masses are appraised of the real dangers threatening their very existence. This can be done and the process accelerated by R.S.S. A movement of mass contact can be and should be launched. The R.S.S. can speak freely and frankly for it does not need any vote bank. Framing of appeasing slogans is a dangerous exercise.

The B.J.P. is diluting its stand. It was Gandhi who conferred the title of Qaide-Azam on Jinnah, but to what effect? Nothing helped, for Muslims are a determined lot with only one aim - DARUL ISLAM. Let Hindus see the truth and not put themselves on the road to total annihilation.

Time is indeed for stock taking. Once the Muslims are convinced that Hindus are not a divided lot and are prepared for, the ultimate sacrifice to save their country, religion, culture, and traditions, they will cease to create trouble. Hindus will have to be assertive. Let Muslims live in India as any other citizens with all the rights even though they got their share in shape of Pakistan. But Hindu tolerance is being misinterpreted as weakness and Muslims have become more and more aggressive, intolerant and demanding. They should forget - LAD KE LIYA PAKISTAN, HANS KE LENGE HINDUSTAN.

Most of the present leadership in the non-B.J.P. parties did not witness the conditions before or during partition. The communal parties like Muslim League and National Conference and mushroom parties like B.S.P., S.P., J.D. combine to keep the B.J.P. out of power. The nation is secondary to all non-B.J.P. parties today, least realising that they are working for total destruction of themselves.

A point naturally arises as to why the B.J.P. is untouchable for all? Why every political party wants to keep away from it? Though the answer is there in the foregoing paragraphs, a little further examination is needed.

B.J.P., originally Jana Sangh, got its present name after the Janata Party into which Jana Sangh had merged, disintegrated. Jana Sangh was purely a party of Hindus. B.J.P. expanded its base and today

admits members of all religions including Muslims. But the Muslims are still wary of it and mistrust it. There is a general feeling that it is controlled and guided by the R.S.S. This belief gains from the fact that most of the top leaders belong to the R.S.S. cadre. The R.S.S. controls and guides other organisations like V.H.P., Bajrang Dal, Vidyarthi Parishad etc. The R.S.S. deputes Swayamsevaks to the B.J.P. also. Thus these organisations present a picture of expansion of the R.S.S..

Since the B.J.P. has also deviated and diluted its stand, people have begun to equate it with other political parties and not essentially a party with a difference. The B.J.P. instead of becoming vote conscious should have a clear cut programme in National interest. The party has become almost silent on the issues of Ram Mandir, Kashi and Mathura. The B.J.P. should woo Hindu votes. This is the only alternative to save the country left to us. It should give a call for aggressive Hinduism for it is their land and any claim for further partition etc. has to be resisted and fought. Slogans are not going to convince any Muslim but may misguide Hindus.

8. S. K. Dalvi¹⁹

I received a pamphlet from you entitled ‘Time for Stock Taking’.

Since 1930 I have been a devotee of Hindutva, having been in association with the people who at that time used to be called ‘**Savarkarites**’ at Ratnagiri.

Although I did not/do not possess the qualities of a leader, writer or an orator, since then I have contributed to the cause of Hindutva according to my capacity, even at the cost of being teased sarcastically as a Votary.

I have gone through the two documents incorporated in the said pamphlet, and with reference to the topic in general I have to offer a certain line of thinking which may help in forming the accurate concepts which the whole idea of Hindutva and Hindu Nation consists of.

To begin with, let us take the codified Hindu Law. Although straight away it does not state who a Hindu is or give the definition of a Hindu, in Sec. 2 it declares to whom the law becomes applicable. After enumerating several sects born within the borders of our motherland, the legislation specifically states that it is not applicable to Muslims, Christians, Jews and Parsis. The law was passed by our Parliament after careful deliberations. It clearly means that every person whose system of worship springs from this land is a Hindu, and that the one whose system of worship is born outside the borders of our country is not a Hindu. This law is passed and enacted as the Personal Law of Hindus, but the fact that a person whose Matrubhoomy (Motherland), Pitrubhoomy (Fatherland) and Punyabhoomi (Holyland) are here in this country (including the territory of Pakistan artificially carved out) is a Hindu, has to be conceded. Every such person has been assigned the nomenclature ‘Hindu’.

All the ingredients that constitute a Nation relate to Motherland, Fatherland and Holyland. In the case of Hindus who constitute over 84% of the population, all these features fall in their own land. Hindus are, therefore, a full-fledged Nation and not a truncated one when juxtaposed against any other State which may be called a Nation but which is not Holyland, i.e. Punyabhoomi. Every other nation (except Saudi Arabia) has its Punyabhoomi outside the borders of its territory. This is the unique position to indicate that the Hindus are a superior Nation. Unfortunately, however, this fact is neither known nor understood by majority of our people. Any acknowledgment of this fact is abused as communalism or fundamentalism as if it is a sin to have taken birth in such a setting of superior status.

It should be noted that although the name of the world organisation is United Nations, the condition prescribed for its membership is ‘*an independent sovereign state*’ and not ‘Nation’. Its membership consists of States only and not Nations. No full-fledged nation is available except the Hindus Nation and Saudi Arabia. All other members of the United Nations have only two

¹⁹ The writer is an Advocate in the High Court at Mumbai.

elements, viz: Matrubhoomi and Pitrubhoomi.

Now, therefore, it is Hindus alone who constitute a full-fledged and complete Nation, which fact we should ever be proud of.

Pseudo-secularists in an attempt to build a composite State are denying the fact that Hindus themselves constitute a Nation. This idea of a composite State has given rise to '*Sarva Dharma Samabhāv*' and the like, a device to divert the attention of Hindus from the fundamental fact that they are the only full-fledged Nation. This will degenerate into division of political power equally amongst all religious groups amongst whom Hindus will constitute only 1/5th. Thus the statutory majority will be reduced to a statutory minority.

In view of the above, it is for the Hindus to find out without fear or favour the ways to constitutionally determine the status of the rest vis-à-vis the Hindu Nation providing reasonable protection but not permitting conflict with the fundamentals of the Hindu Nation, lest the Muslims who have virtually covered a substantial ground capture political power by vertically partitioning the Hindus under the pretext of 'social justice', reservations being the effective instrument in that direction.

Only a few people are aware of the fact that the Muslims controlled by their Personal Law Board have already demanded their separate Law Courts on district level, thus striking a severe blow to our Judiciary which is one of the organs of our SOVEREIGNTY, the other two being Legislature and Executive.

Hindus should not take these circumstances as a matter of course. These are the results of distortion and misinterpretation of the concept of 'tolerance' on the part of Hindus themselves.

Since Socialism has totally collapsed even where it was born, there is no reason why all leftist parties should not be disbanded and declared illegal. It is this clan of politicians which hates every thing that is Hindu.

The above views may not be appropriately responsive to various points mentioned in the said documents, but it is my conviction that any deviation on the part of Hindus from the above reality or any attempt at dilution of this stand, shall prove disastrous to Hindu posterity.

9. Ashoke Dasgupta²⁰

I am in receipt of the booklet detailing two documents of Dr. Shreerang Godbole. I am grateful for the same. My response on these two documents is as under:

It is evident that '*Sarva Panth Samādar Manch*' is launched because a new avenue is being sought in order to frame a policy in respect of the Muslim question in the Indian polity.

It is rather an approach - an approach to be in touch of the Muslim community so that the political untouchability towards BJP propagated by the Secularists can be overcome.

The question is: how far this approach is correct and how much effective it will be. Dr. Shreerang Godbole has raised some basic questions about this approach. His points come from the study of Islam. This is why if his points are not given due weightage, the teaching of history will get disregarded. The real question for the last one thousand years in India in respect of the Hindu-Muslim question is not Hindu vs. Muslim; it is Muslim vs. Islam and thereafter Hindu vs. Islam.

All peoples from Morocco to Afghanistan-Pakistan became Muslim; Islam swept away all their national cultures, diversities, peculiarities and moulded all of them into a single pattern, a single creed. Islam washes away national culture, and inheritance. The agony of Bangladesh under the heels of Pakistan was primarily due to Islam. The movement in Bangladesh along the line of culture and language had no appreciation in Islam. Islam recognizes no nationalism. This becomes vivid in the Taliban possession of Afghanistan. Had there been a strong bondage of national spirit, the Afghan people would not be subjected to the unending horrors of the last decade.

It is Islam, again, which is responsible for the creation of Pakistan for the Indian Muslims. Both the Hindus and Muslims had gone through blood and fire for the sake of Islam. The struggles of the Muslims never record struggles for national causes, but refer to struggles for personal or group ambition, or inter-religion combat, or sect acrimony such as Shia or Sunni or other sects of Islam. The contemporary illustration is the Iraq-Iran War for several years. These insane and futile killings for years are also due to Islam because it is sect vs. sect of Islam. History is a witness that the Middle East was the stage of many ancient civilisations - Egyptian to Persian - but such great varieties ceased since Islam ascended in the area. Like the last Rasul of Islam, Islam itself is the last to come. Hence, it has had no Renaissance. So, the unsolved problem in India for a thousand years is not Hindu vs. Muslim. The Sangh Parivar may be leaning towards such a concept that can be visualised in the coinage of '*Sarva Panth Samādar*'.

The real problem is Muslim vs. Islam. Ninety-five percent of Indian Muslims are converted Hindus i.e. Islam had them from Hindus but since their conversion they were alienated from the Hindus i.e. their own culture and tradition. They had to shift their cultural tradition and sense of values, in a word, the basic tenets of civilization. It is a horrible subjugation of Muslims by Islam. And, in the

²⁰ The writer is from Jalpaiguri in West Bengal.

process of history, this alienation drove them to claim a separate nationhood, again inspired by Islam, to cause partition of India. Indian Muslims became Pakistanis and went more into the grip of Islam, lost their self-identity more grievously, making no nation actually. Pakistan has not evolved as a nation; it is peoples and groups held under the yoke of Islam and labouring hard to project Islam as a culture. Thus one has to reach the conclusion that Islam has caused more pains, outrages and sufferings to the Muslims in India than to the Hindus because they lost their culture and heritage which the Hindus did not. Islam has deprived them of nationhood.

The thousand year old question seen apparently as Hindu vs. Muslim cannot be answered unless the basic Muslim vs. Islam aspect of the problem is grasped. This is the basic problem and it requires a basic approach.

The basic approach cannot be envisaged unless the fear of losing Muslim vote is given a farewell, till Muslims understand how the dreadful weight of the Sunnah deprives them from becoming democratic with national identity. Muslims need really to accomplish the task of coming out of the stranglehold of the fundamentalist arrogance of the Sunnah that causes slavery to creed and dogma. The organisations that fear to lose Muslim votes cannot do real service to Muslims because Muslims are victims of Islam. Indian Muslims, being liberated from quarters of Islam, shall regain their Nationhood and then the loathsome speeches of the priests of fake secularism shall be heard no more.

The slogan of ‘Sarva Panth Samādar’ is nothing new and it shall fetch no better dividends than ‘Sarva Dharma Samabhāva’ preached by a section of pseudo-secularists almost for last seventy-five years. Such slogans have done no good either for Hindus or for Muslims; they have prevented Hindus to speak fearlessly for the good of Muslims and, on the other hand, kept Muslims in increasing alienation as if they are in exile from their mother culture, tradition and heritage, leading them to cultural orphanage. Forbearance from having Muslim vote for a period shall be a bliss for cultural rejuvenation of Indian Muslims to their mother culture.

The question is: which way, then, the Sangh Parivar should go? Shall it toil for Muslim votes like others by subscribing to the onslaught of Islam on Muslims or shall it take up the cause of undoing the stranglehold of Islam on the Muslim mind? The stranglehold of Quran and Sunnah on Muslim mind has to be shaken by a democratic process. Unless it is done, the problem of Muslim vs. Islam that has remained unsolved for a thousand years and bled the country for centuries, will continue.

And, in this light, the eight points raised by Dr. Shreerang Godbole acquire relevance. BJP shall suffer in terms of popular support if it accepts the old Congress line manifested by such forums as Sarva Panth Samādar Manch, because people want to see the BJP as a national and not as an ideological replica of the Congress.

10. Jitendra D. Desai²¹

FIRST DOCUMENT:

1. *What is the harm in adding Jesus and Muhammad to the 33 crore Hindu gods and goddesses?*

Response: What is the need? Why do we want to add two more gods to 33 crore gods and goddesses? Is this a genuine desire to assimilate two communities following two Semitic religions?

In my opinion, the Sangh leadership is guided by BJP leadership, which in turn is guided by desire to achieve political supremacy at any cost, and this desire (of political power at any cost) has brought down the BJP leadership to the lowly depths of electoral arithmetic - votes count, votes of Christians and Muslims also count. Hindu leadership may recommend addition of two more idols of Jesus and Muhammad in the Hindu pantheon, but are Hindus prepared to worship them? Are Christians and Muslims prepared to accept this accommodation?

2. *All Religions (Including Islam) lead to God.*

Response: True. But Muslims and Christians do not think so. It is they (Muslims and Christians) who need to be tutored on this, and not the Hindus. Most of the wars in modern time have been fought by Muslims and Christians to convince kafirs and heathens that it was only their prophet and their book which can lead to God.

3. *Islam is good but Muslims are bad.*

Response: If Islam was good, how is it that it has produced so many bad adherents? If Islam is good, then show us at least one Islamic nation which is at peace with itself. Show us one Islamic nation which is not undergoing a violent turmoil.

The forefathers of the Muslims of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Hindustan and Bangladesh were all Hindus. What is it that has transformed these erstwhile Hindus into fanatics?

Before the advent of Islam, the Egyptians and the Arabs were great people. Islam has turned these great people into morons. Arab nations which are sitting on trillions of petro-dollars, have failed to produce a great thinker or a great humanist or a great scientist or a great artist in all these years. They have failed to improve the economic conditions of their poor brethren in Asia and Africa; instead they are frittering away their oil wealth in building mosques and financing terrorism. Islam has failed to inspire them to improve the status of their own mothers and sisters.

4. *If Muslims are told of their common ancestry, they will unite with Hindus.*

Response: As rightly stated by Dr. Godbole, this historic fact is quite well known to the

²¹ The writer who lives in Surat in Gujarat has been a Swayamsevak of the RSS since 1980.

Muslims in the subcontinent.

Has it helped Muslims to unite among themselves, let alone uniting with Hindus?

And prey, why unite them with Hindus? For narrow political gains? Why not unite all 70 crore Hindus instead, for some purpose?

5. *Congress used Muslims. Congress treats Muslims as vote banks. We (BJP) will treat Muslims as human beings.*

Response: All politicians treat all their constituents as vote banks.

The BJP, rather than promising to its would-be Muslim voters a humane treatment, should quickly think of treating its Hindu voters as human beings.

Muslims have left the BJP alone and are ‘crying’ to be left alone, so leave them alone. The whole world is learning to leave them alone.

If at all you want to treat them as human beings, start treating their women as human beings. This work can be left to grassroot level workers of BJP’s Mahila Aghadi or Rashtra Sevika Samiti or Durga Vahini. Leaders should concentrate on ‘leading’ rather than ‘treating’ someone as a human or an inhuman being.

6. *Sufis are tolerant Muslims.*

Response: Sufis were not ‘tolerant’, they were tolerated by ordinary Hindus in the false belief that they were saints and mendicants.

7. *Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims.*

Response: As stated earlier, Muslims have become a community which is ‘crying’ to be left alone, and Hindu society alongwith the whole world has learnt to leave them alone. Hence, the ghettos. Neither the Muslim leaders nor their Hindu counterparts can pull the Muslims out of their Islam-imposed exile.

8. *Namaz offered on a disputed site (like Ayodhya) is not acceptable to Allah.*

Response: Why become an unwanted emissary of their Allah? Let them decide, which namaz is acceptable to whom.

SECOND DOCUMENT

Response: ‘**Sarva Dharma Samabhāv**’ is a value which is deeply ingrained in the psyche of every Hindu. It has evolved and flourished through the ages without the support of a ‘Manch’ or any such thing.

A Hindu is civilizationally trained to tolerate a sect to which he does not belong. This is because his

civilization has gone on throwing up sects and sub-sects at regular intervals as part of an internal cleansing, invigorating, rejuvenating process. This has made a Hindu and his civilization one of the greatest survivors of history.

A ‘Manch’ is not needed by them (Hindus). However, a ‘Manch’ needs to be created by Indian Muslims and Indian Christians which will enable Muslims and Christians to understand the Hindu ethos and value system. Sadly, such initiatives from Muslim and Christian leaders are not forthcoming. So be it. Why should Hindu leaders worry about Hindus cultivating ‘Samādar’ for Semitic religions?

The present-day competitive politics is slowly destroying the centuries-old values of ‘Sarva Dharma Samabhāv’ of Hindus. There is also competition among newer and newer Hindu sects to win more and more adherents.

The competitive politics has also managed to divide the 70 crore strong Hindu community along caste and community lines.

Hindu leaders need to bring all these Hindus on the single ‘Manch’ of Dharma. We have to worry more about Hindus having ‘Samādar’ for their fellow Hindus rather than worry about Hindusthanis following Semitic religions.

Muslims will have to follow the example of Parsees in Gujarat, who have contributed so much for the well-being of their new nation state, but who at the same time have maintained their separate identity for the past 1000 years.

11. Nachiketa Dogra²²

Received your ‘Time for Stock Taking’. Each and every word of this pamphlet especially from Dr. Godbole spoke my heart and mind. I bow down before you and Godbole for such an unbeatable logic.

Hindu intellectuals should expose Quran and Hadith i.e. Islam. Islam in itself is very very weak and fragile without any reason and philosophy. It is medieval and unscientific. So it will not at all stand the test of time. It violates human rights mercilessly. So it will crumble down with double of the speed with which it rose up, once it is declothed. Muslims and Secularists have covered it up with a black cloth like the one in Mecca. Islam will depreciate in the mind of Muslims themselves when Hindus start showing the real face of it. Majority of the Muslims (especially Indian Muslims) don’t know Quran and Hadith. Some Muslim intellectuals (rather Muslim fanatics) have now started interpreting Islam and Quran in a modified way so that its ugly face is not exposed.

Listen to Radio Iran or Radio Pakistan or even Radio Doche Vale Clon, Germany. They give polished interpretations of Quran and Hadith and present Hinduism in a bad shape. But we Hindus being citizens of Secular India cannot rebut or counter them. Thus ‘Secularism’ has become a curse for Hindu Culture and Hinduism. The moment we speak of Hinduism, Congress and Communists will cry and tell the Muslims, *“Look, these communal Hindus will eliminate you.”*

Earlier there were efforts from some patriotic and daring Hindus to ban the Quran in India but the Congress Government didn’t allow even discussion on it. So now I feel we should adopt the other way i.e. to propagate to people what the Quran contains, to educate people (including Muslims) about its illogic, to expose to them its inhumanity and obsoleteness. In Kashmir I observed that many well educated people had not known some of the Ayats and their meaning which I showed them from an English book. First they asserted that there were no such injunctions from Quran but slowly they agreed to some extent though with different explanations. The greatest difficulty in discussing Islam or Quran with Muslims is that they avoid discussing it even among friends lest they earn wrath from Prophet Mohammad, or be disrespectful to any Ayat or prophet or somebody may inform about this involvement in discussion and thus get them declared Kafirs. In fact Muslims are too much afraid of Imams and Maulvis. Muslim mobs are too much in the grip of Imams and Maulvis and Allah’s wrath so much so that nobody dares to think freely and speak openly about his opinion regarding the ultimateness of the Quran. But one thing is there. Some Muslims do have some genuine doubts about which they seldom open their mouths for fear from their own community.

I doubt if true face of Islam can be exposed or much change in the political and administrative set up of India take place even when the BJP comes to power at Centre. I don’t know then why BJP also has adopted the policy of appeasement towards Muslims and started Sarva Panth Samādar Manch. I think BJP can consolidate Hindus more if it speaks as a ‘communal’ Hindu instead of as

²² The writer is from Jalandhar City in Punjab.

secular Hindu. And as a Hindu it has to educate Muslims of their past and of their Hindu ancestry. We have to advertise that all Muslims had become converts from Hindus due to force under Muslim rule, otherwise all Muslims are Hindus coming from Hindu ancestors. So Islam is not a suitable ideology for them by tradition or temperament.

DOCUMENT 1: MY ANSWERS

1. It is just beating about the bush.
2. It is the biggest deceit, amounting to cheating ignorant and innocent people.
3. It is rather the other way round. Muslims are good, but Islam (Quran and Hadith) are bad. Muslims are victims of Islam.
4. Yes, true, if they are also educated about what Quran and Hadith contain and how Islam is nothing but an imposition on them and not suitable to their temperament as they are children of higher civilisation and culture.
5. This is also a misconception. It is the Muslims who exploited Congress or blackmailed it.
6. Sufis were ground-preparers for Islam.
7. Totally wrong and a baseless propaganda only.
8. Totally wrong and a baseless propaganda only.

12. Adwayanand R. Galatge²³

Dr. Shreerang Godbole, an RSS worker from Pune, has done some plain speaking to the Sangh leaders on the question of Muslims. It is tragic to find that they really deserve it. It is a measure of the level to which the RSS has been reduced by its leaders' recent preoccupation with politics. The sordid drama recently enacted on the Gujarat stage exposes the hazards of politics to which RSS is open and can ill-afford. The small-time 'shows' like 'Sarva Panth Samādar Manch' and the political gimmicks like the '*eight formulations*' that Dr. Godbole has cited (and criticised), are the natural fall-out of this preoccupation. They are, if anything, the '*saffron brand of secularism*'. If the Sangh leaders believe that these exercises will win the confidence of the Muslims for the political gains of the BJP, they are deceiving themselves. The sooner they disabuse their minds of this misconception, the better. Nor does it show any political maturity on their part to believe that these exercises will bring the Muslims into the national mainstream. It makes one wonder whether Sangh leaders also are so obtuse as to be incapable of learning from history like those whom they criticise.

This does not mean that the RSS should close its doors to Muslims, or help perpetuate their ghetto mentality. Those from the Muslim community who subscribe to Sangh philosophy should be admitted to the RSS camp, but this should be done strictly by the test of honest adherence to the Sangh principles and ideals, and not by any kind of appeasement, howsoever subtle.

THE PROBLEM OF ISLAM

This, of course, does not solve the problem of Islam, which is chiefly responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims. Muslims should, no doubt, be viewed as victims of Islam, as Dr. Godbole puts it. But politics is not the way to 'cure' them of it. Politics, if anything, will entrench them in Islam, and not 'cure' them, as the post-Independence politics of India has demonstrated.

Most of the Muslims of India are former Hindus. Islam has conquered nations by forcible conversions, and what is conquered by force cannot be reconquered except by force, if history is any guide. But this historical road is not open to the Hindus due to their adoption of the democratic system of government, apart from the fact that it is against their Sanātana Dharma.

The idea that Islam will crumble if efforts are made to 'expose' it, is also misplaced. Islam is not an ideology like Marxism or any other 'ism' as Dr. Godbole believes. Ideologies that usually go under the suffix of 'ism' have at least some philosophy at their base. Islam has no philosophy whatsoever. It is a system of beliefs and blind beliefs, at that, with outdated medieval customs and practices to bolster it up. Hence Islam is not open to rational debate or arguments as all 'isms' are. On the contrary, any attempt to 'expose' it rationally, or even artistically, is counterproductive as the examples of Rushdie, Taslima and Anwar Shaikh go to prove. It fans the very fire of fanaticism that it intends to quench.

²³ The writer is from Bhoj in Belgaum District of Karnataka.

THE ONLY SOLUTION

This brings us back to the RSS, i.e. to the reason that led Dr. Hedgewar to found it. Dr. Hedgewar never worried himself with the problem of Muslims, still less of Islam. He set out to set his own house in order. It is a sad day in the history of the RSS that its leaders are so much exercised over the problem of Muslims and Islam, which is not their concern. They are frittering away their energies in wrong directions and useless channels. They should know that it is politics that has created the so-called Muslim problem. It is strange that, of all the people, it is the Sangh leaders who are breaking their heads on this problem. Muslims are a problem, if at all, to the politicians, not to the Sangh leaders. Sangh leaders should first address themselves to the ‘problem’ of the Hindus, which, if solved, will automatically solve the ‘problem’ of the Muslims, if it is a problem; and this they can do effectively only if they completely abstain from politics, because politics never solves problems. It creates problems.

A WARNING

The recent political victories of the BJP have fired the ambition and imagination of the Sangh workers, and thrown them headlong into politics. The recent writings of thinkers like Ram Swarup, Frawley, Shourie, Anwar Shaikh et al, intended for political effect, seem to have persuaded them to pay all their attention to ‘the dangerous political ideologies masquerading as religions’. There is no harm in ‘exposing’ these so-called *‘ideologies masquerading as religions’*. But that will not solve the **Hindu problem**, irrespective of whether this ‘exposure’ will bring about their downfall. The fall of Communism in Russia was not due to the intellectual exercise of ‘exposure’ of Marxism, but to social and economic causes. In any case, these ‘exposures’ are no solution to our immediate problems, and I honestly feel that the energies of the Sangh workers should not be wasted on issues that do not directly concern us. Their energies should be constructively utilized in the cause of the Hindus, who are progressively being divided on caste and other lines by political upstarts. But engaging in political battles to counter the effect of these upstarts will only accentuate the problem and not solve it. It should never be forgotten that it was political interests and ambitions that kept the Hindus disunited and divided, and made them fall an easy prey to Muslims throughout history. (Did not political ambition split the monolith BJP, the party of discipline, in Gujarat?) The seeds of BJP’s Muslim appeasement under ‘saffron brand of secularism’ lie in this very political prepossession. Let not those seeds sprout, which will certainly do if Sangh workers engage in its politics by staging such ‘shows’ as the ‘Manch’.

Let the Sangh leaders and workers stop fighting battles and begin working seriously to win the war.

Note:

How politics vitiates the intellectual perception of the Hindu leaders can be seen from the very first formulation that Dr. Godbole has cited. It says that there is no harm in adding Jesus and Muhammad to the 33 crore Hindu gods. This is the height of ignorance on the part of those who make this preposterous statement. No Hindu scripture says that there are 33 crore Hindu gods. ‘Koti’ does not mean ‘crore’ but ‘class’ as in ‘Manushya-Koti’, ‘Dera-Koti’ etc. (See V.S. Apte’s Sanskrit-English Dictionary). There are 33 classes of natural elements, metaphorically called deities (and not gods), like earth, fire, water etc. These 33 natural elements or principles are listed in

BrihadāraNyakopanishad, in Chapter 3, BrāhmaNa 9, verses 2 to 9, where their discussion leads the sage to reduce them by logical steps to one Ultimate Principle called Brahman or the World Spirit. How are those, who make the above statement, going to add Jesus and Muhammad to these 33 natural elements, like earth, water etc., and how do they reduce Jesus and Muhammad to the Ultimate World Spirit, are the questions they must answer! When the leaders themselves betray such ignorance, what can be said about those whom they 'lead'? This example shows how the 'touch' of politics can even change gold into mud, a miracle no other 'discipline' is capable of!

13. K. B. Ganapathy²⁴

I have your request for response to the circular titled ‘Time for Stock Taking’ and here is my response for the first document given item-wise in order to keep it to the minimum.

1. It may be possible in the next 100 years or so to add Jesus Christ as one of the many Gods (33 crore Hindu gods and goddesses) as Jesus is a Godhead for Christians and Christians have no objection for portraying Jesus and his disciples in the form of idols and pictures just as Hindus have added Buddha as one of the Avatars.

However, since Muhammad is not considered a godhead by Muslims but only as the God’s messenger and since Islam does not permit idolatry, painting or portrait of Prophet Muhammad, it may not be possible to add Muhammad to the Hindu pantheon of Gods. Moreover, Allah is formless, rather rightly, and therefore no image of either Allah or Muhammad is found in mosques and are strictly prohibited.

2. What is true of all religions is the belief of its followers that religion alone can lead to God, and so it is also true of Islam. It is against human nature, no matter to which religion one belongs, not to criticise a religion when one feels that such criticism is just according to one’s wisdom and understanding. After all, the very concept of God has its birth in the emotion of FEAR (of ageing, disease and death) and in front of nature even God, no matter of which religion, is powerless. Buddha seems to have understood this fundamental truth about nature more than any Prophet or Scripture.
3. I would say Muslims are good but Islam is misinterpreted, like no other religion, by the vested interests for seeking power, position and wealth.
4. It is wrong to think that if Muslims are told of their common ancestry they will unite with Hindus. The words ‘unite with’, I hope, are not used here to mean ‘convert to’.

Here, we must understand that all those who subscribe to any religion are all converts, including Hindus. After all in the beginning there was only animism and nature worship, call it Paganism. Later Prophets and Scriptures, some of them by Rishis and wise men like Confucius, came to influence the people who became their followers. Jesus was a Jew, remember. Basavanna was a Brahmin. Therefore, the common ancestry has nothing to do here; it is only the belief that matters. A Hindu may become a renegade, disgusted with crores of gods, funny rituals couched in superstition. The common ancestry has nothing to do in uniting them with Hindus, rather the Common Law (Common Civil Code) will.

²⁴ The writer is Editor and Managing Director of Star of Mysore and Maisooru Mithra published from Mysore in Karnataka.

5. It is hypocrisy to say that the BJP will treat Muslims as human beings. They too will want their votes to capture power. There is nothing wrong if Congress used Muslims. What is important is that nobody should misuse Muslims for votes.
6. I do not think Sufis are tolerant Muslims. In fact, they are as fanatical as the conservative Brahmins of the Hindu religion. They are more subtle, clever rather than vocal and violent.
7. I think Muslim mullahs are responsible, rather than Muslim political leaders, for the ghetto mentality of the Muslims. Don't we have Brahmin Aghahars and Brahmin Vellys where they live away from others?
8. I do not think it is right to say that Namaz offered on a disputed site like Ayodhya is not acceptable to Allah. We must remember that a devout Muslim offers his prayers even in the battlefield, which is often a disputed site, and we have any number of instances of Muslim kings and warriors offering prayers in the middle of a war.

Second Document: Regarding Sarva Panth Samādar Manch.

It is a futile exercise, unnecessary and not likely to serve the dubious purpose it aims to achieve.

Instead of exposing oneself to ridicule by setting up organisations that are suspect in their motives, the best course is to strengthen the existing organisations purely on the basis of the avowed objective which is already set before them.

14. Padmashri Shalil Ghosh²⁵

I am grateful to you for sending me a copy of 'Time for Stock Taking' by Dr. S. Godbole.

I fully agree with his contentions.

Hindus, throughout the ages, especially our so-called '**MAHATMAS**', never understood the Muslim mind and fell an easy prey to Muslim manipulations. Hindus were always on the defensive for no reason at all, (see my enclosed letter to Organiser weekly, Delhi, dated 2.8.1996, as an example).

To me slogans such as '**SARVA DHARMA SAMBHĀVA**' or its new avatar '**SARVA PANTH SAMĀDAR MANCH**' are expressions of hypocrisy, just to get votes (same tactics as of the Congress party).

We have to be more straight-forward now. The time has come when we have to be hard-hitting without mincing any words. These '*goody-goody*' writings or talks, trying not to offend anybody, are out of date.

If necessary, we have now to warn everyone to behave properly if they want to stay in this country or else they will be thrown out lock, stock, and barrel.

Letter to the Organiser

Re: '**DURGA**' in the VANDE MATARAM song as composed
by Bankimchandra

We do not understand why we Hindus have to be apologetic about the mention of 'Durga' in the above song, and try to give some other explanation, or even get certificates about the same from Muslim scholars that the 'Durga' in Vande Mataram is not the Hindu Goddess but our Motherland (Organiser, 4.8.96).

This has been going on throughout the last 100 years, the same arguments - of the Congress type, 'Hindu Secularists' and Muslim League type to 'Islamic Secularist' of our country.

I would like to clearly point out that Bankim's Durga means both our Motherland and Hindu Goddess Durga, a symbol of the 'Mother' of all Indians. Conception of Durga in Indian minds is much more ancient and older than the advent of Christianity or Islam in this country. Those who object to this conception of ours, should leave this country and find some other motherland.

²⁵ The writer lives in Bombay.

It is high time we stop all the silly controversies about Vande Mataram and that insult Bankim and our countrymen to whom this is the most sacred song of Free India.

Recently, Mankind, the journal founded by Rammanohar Lohia, derided Vande Mataram as 'Hindu'. I would like to point out to the publication that, even if it is 'Hindu', what is wrong there in a Hindu majority country? Why do we have to denigrate the great patriotic composition all the time?

Is it just because it inspired our Freedom Movement *that the Indian Underdogs of the British Raj cry against it?*

15. Bhagwati Prasad Goenka²⁶

I am thankful to you for a copy of ‘Time for Stock Taking’ booklet.

Religions are made for people to shape their lives, in short, to establish a code of conduct for themselves. A religion which preaches that other religions are inferior, cannot be equated with a religion which preaches that all are equal and that all can attain salvation whatever way they adopt. For this matter the comparing of Islam or Christianity with Hinduism is not only impractical but totally naive.

1. If one is intolerant to any other form or concept of faith as is the case with Islam and Christianity, the question of accepting them as equal is totally and plainly stupid. Therefore, accepting their perpetrators like Jesus and Mohammad or equating them with Hindu Gods/Goddesses cannot arise. It is they who fed that any other form of belief is substandard and therefore the malady lies there.
2. Whatever form one wishes to adopt as one’s vehicle to reach Godhood is best left to the individual; we do not wish to discuss the issue, leave aside interfere with one’s ways. But we also will not allow interference with our concept for any reason, be it to the point of being called communal or fascist or whatever pseudo-jargon the self-seekers heap on us.
3. Neither is Islam good nor are Muslims good; both are two faces of the same coin. Having lived on easy and ill-gotten goodies, they (especially the Indian Muslims) still live in their glorified (ghastly) past of having ruled the country for almost 800 years. And what a rule - destruction of Hindu places of faith, forcible conversions, abductions and what not! How shameful have been these 800 years, and yet we wish to appease these slimy characters, have we no spine? Any other people would have sought damages, compensation if not an equal chance of paying back in the same coin.
4. On this point I am only partly in agreement with Dr. Godbole. All, practically all except committed votes, go to the prospective winning political party. Congress has always projected itself as the strongest contender to the throne at Delhi. Only now - that too after the Ayodhya episode - the BJP has become the front runner. Congress knew that Hindus are fragmented, disunited and of slave mentality while Muslims can unite and can be made to vote en masse; therefore, the Congress always kept the Muslims with them and tacitly played politics. It created a fear psychosis and a feeling of prosecution amongst the Muslims and projected themselves as their only saviour, thus ensuring their en masse votes while doing precious little for their upliftment in social, moral and economic standards. That it always played the double role of not punishing this group for its wrong doings, is apparent from records spanning for the last 50 years. Two cases in point being the Ayodhya episode and the aftermath of the Bombay blasts.
5. No Muslim is tolerant. Tolerance is a great virtue which is received only after great penance and after realising the meaning of life. No religion except Hinduism can claim to possess this

²⁶ The writer is from Shillong in Meghalaya

virtue. However, let not tolerance be confused with cowardice. Sufis are no exception of the general Muslim character as fundamentally they are also of the same mind-set.

6. Quite true. Islam and its preaching are responsible for the ghetto mentality amongst the Muslims. But why go into the finery of this issue at all. If the Muslim leaders are responsible, so are the Muslims - the result being that the Muslims in general are of ghetto mentality. This requires correction not by appeasement but by strict discipline. Islam as it is being taught contaminated by extra-Islamic regimens like Hadis etc. is only instrumental in dehumanising people of this community.
7. Namaz cannot be offered at a 'disputed place' but this tenet is more often followed in breach.

It is not possible to assimilate people who believe that they are the best and none else has the right to even exist. It is against the principles of democracy which India is. Sarva Dharma Samabhāv or Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam are noble and humane principles but based on TOLERANCE even to the point of being multi-ideational. Only when these people stand up to criticise their own holy books and tenets and question the Mullahs and Padris can light be bestowed on them and a ray of hope towards true civilisation can come to them. Before that happens, let us not equate the enlightened and the ignorant.

If the meaning of 'Sarva Panth Samādar Manch' is what is detailed, it is certainly most disturbing and would mean diluting our own noble principles of equality of human beings. The questions asked in the letter to Shri. K.S. Sundarshanji are viewed by me as under:

1. The meaning of 'Sarva Panth' should be clearly defined and confined to only Bharatiya spiritual practices.
2. It cannot include Islam or Christianity or for that matter Marxism, Nazism and Fascism.
3. It is idiotic to try to accommodate religions which do not accept anything beyond their own teaching. We should not concern ourselves with Islam or Muslims; we have to unite Hindus of this country and worldwide as one body and we have no reason to try to assimilate others who even do not consider us to be equal.
4. It is a futile exercise to assume that all religions are worthy of equal respect. We already say this by preaching 'Sarva Dharma Samabhāv' and '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**' but this acceptance is with a corollary - the other person or his religion must accept us also as equals.
5. There is no question of accepting anyone who has even the remotest sense of superiority or who considers his form of worship as the only path to GOD. These propagators must learn to accept us, respect our forms of worship, and love this country, thus applying for eligibility to be accepted by us; till then let us forget about them and concentrate on strengthening our own people.

16. Shiv Goud²⁷

I have received your pamphlet ‘Time for Stock Taking’, and gone through it in detail.

Your first document mentions the attitude of Hindu organizations towards the Muslims problem.

Only Hindus who are unaware of the Vedas, say that there is no harm in adding Jesus and Mohammed to the 33 crore Hindu gods and goddesses. It is an indication of the slave mentality of Hindus. Christianity and Islam are Semitic religions. Both of them waged religious wars against each other but did not accept the religion of the other party, as equal to their own.

During the Freedom Struggle, Congress said that unless there is unity between Hindus and Muslims India cannot get independence; therefore, Muslims were adamant for Pakistan. India was divided at the instance of Muslims who had never joined the national stream. Pakistan was carved out of India for the sake of Muslims but the majority of Muslims were allowed to stay in India, whereas Hindus were wiped out from Pakistan.

There were patriots like V.D. Savarkar who studied the Muslim mentality microscopically and proposed that instead of crying for Hindu-Muslim unity we must say, *If the Muslims join the Hindus, with them; if they do not join, without them, and if they oppose, inspite of them, Hindus will carry on the struggle for freedom*. Congress leaders did not accept this proposition and yielded to the demand of Pakistan.

Hindus go to pray at Muslim shrines but not a single Muslim goes to a Hindu temple and offers even a scent stick. Christians and Muslims are happy that Hindus are yielding to their dogmas, and adding their Prophet and Son of God to Hindu gods.

Those Hindus who are for adding Jesus and Mohammed are ignorant of Christianity and Islam. Without studying the Bible and the Quran, they are carelessly going for addition, without caring for the harmful effects.

Some Hindus wrote ‘**Allapanishad**’ during the reign of emperor Akbar. They equated Allah with Eashwar. The same sort of Hindus wrote in the Bhavishya Purana and the Kalki Purana saying that not only Adam, Noah, Moses, Christ and Mohammed are Avathara Purushas but also emperor Akbar and Aurangazebe are Avathars.

Mahatma Gandhi renamed Maharishi Vashista as *Mauhi Vashista* and Maharani Sita as *Begum Sahiba Sita*. But these concessions made no difference to the Muslim hostility to Hindus.

Hindus are not following the correct path shown by Swami Dayananda, the founder of Arya Samaj, who wept on their ignorance and suicidal acts.

²⁷ The writer is an Advocate from Sangareddy, District Medak, in Andhra Pradesh.

Islam is a political religion and there is no place for spirituality in it. Political power is paradise for the Muslims.

It is wrong to say that all religions (including Islam) lead to God. The mountain is visible but not God. To reach the top of the mountain a man can go by such a way as is feasible for him. But invisible God is known only by Yoga which is not found in Christianity and Islam. It is not a correct approach to compare God with a mountain or any visible matter.

Islam is not good because it teaches that any thief, drunkard and adulterer can go to paradise if he accepts Islam.

If one Muslim converts to Hindu Dharma they threaten to take his life, whereas many Hindus are being converted to Islam and Christianity but no Hindu is worried about their conversions. Sufis are as fanatical as other fanatical Muslims.

During the Freedom Struggle, Congress gave a call for Hindu-Muslim unity but India was divided; the same leaders have given the call of Secularism to convert India into Islamistan and Isaistan. Government of India has failed to check the flow of foreign money for spreading foreign religions in India.

The R.S.S. says there is no harm in adding Christ and Mohammed as Hindu gods. Jews do not accept Christ as the Son of God and Mohammed as a prophet. Christians do not accept Mohammed as a prophet. But Hindus can go to any suicidal length to appease the Christians and Muslims.

I find it timely to quote from a book, *Sayings of Ayotollah Khomeini*, translated from Persian into French in 1979 and then into English in 1980. The book was published in the USA and Canada, by Bantam Books Inc., in 1980 (ISBN 0-55-14032-9), and carries an introduction by Clive Irving:

1. *'Moslems have no alternative, if they wish to correct the political balance of society and those in power to conform to the laws and principles of Islam, to an armed holy war against profane Governments'* (pp. 3-4).
2. *'Holy war means the conquest of all non-Moslem territories. Such a war may well be declared after the formation of an Islamic Government worthy of that name, at the direction of the Islamic Imam or under his orders. It will then be the duty of every able-bodied adult male to volunteer for this war of conquest, the final aim of which is to put Koranic Law in power from one end of the earth to the other'* (p. 4).
3. *'We have no recourse other than to overthrow all governments that do not rest on pure Islamic principles and are thus corrupt and corrupting, and to tear down the traitorous, rotten, unjust, and tyrannical administrative systems that serve them. That is not only our duty in Iran, but it is also the duty of all Moslems in the world, in all Moslem-countries, to carry the Islamic political revolution to its final victory'*. (p. 6).
4. *'We affirm that music engenders immorality, lust and licentiousness, and stifles courage, valour, and the chivalrous spirit; it is forbidden by Koranic laws and must not be taught in the schools. Radio Teheran, by broadcasting Western, Oriental and Iranian music plays a nefarious role by introducing immorality and licentiousness into respectable families.'* (p. 12).

5. *The Constitution, the civil code, and the criminal code should be inspired only by Islamic laws contained in the Koran and transcribed by the Prophet. Islamic Government is the Government of divine right, and its laws cannot be changed, modified, or contested.* (p. 15).
6. *It is often proclaimed that religion must be separated from politics, and that the ecclesiastical world should keep out of affairs of State. It is proclaimed that high Moslem clerical authorities have no business mixing into the social and political decisions of the Government. Such proclamations can come only from atheists; they are dictated and spread by imperialists. Was politics separate from religion in the time of the Prophet (God salute him, him and his faithful)? Was there a distinction at that time between the religious and the functionaries of the State? Were religious and temporal powers separate in the times of the Caliphs? Those are aberrations invented by the imperialists with a view to turning the clergy life of Moslem peoples, and thus to getting a free hand to pillage their faith.* (pp. 16-17).
7. *If the enemy attacks the borders of an Islamic country, it is the sacred duty of all Moslems in the world to defend it by every means in their power, by giving of their wealth or of their persons. They need await no permission to fulfil this duty.* (p. 18).
8. *In certain cases deception is necessary for the maintenance of Islam and of religion in general; without it faith could not survive.* (p. 24).
9. *The person who governs the Moslem community must always have its interests at heart and not his own. This is why Islam has put so many people to death to safeguard the interests of the Moslem community. Islam has obliterated many tribes because they were sources of corruption and harmful to the welfare of Moslems.* (p. 28).
10. *There are eleven things which are impure; urine, excrement, sperm, bones, blood, dogs, pigs, non-Moslem men and women, wine, beer, and the sweat of the excrement-eating camel.* (p. 48).
11. *Every part of the body of a non-Moslem individual is impure, even the hair on his hand and his body hair, his nails, and all the secretions of his body.* (p. 51).
12. *Wine and all other intoxicating beverages are impure, but opium and hashish are not.* (p. 52).

17. S. C. Gupta²⁸

I refer to the pamphlet **TIME FOR STOCK TAKING - A SWAYAMSEVAK SPEAKS.** which you have sent for my comments. The following pages contain my comments on Dr. Shreerang Godbole's two documents, points by point, in the same order as the points in the pamphlet.

First Document

There is a Hindu resurgence but not to the extent it should be.

It is also true that in spite of Hindu resurgence, the Hindu organisations are becoming softer towards Islam and Muslims. There is no corresponding change in the Muslim attitude towards Hindus or Hinduism. These Hindu organisations sometimes take a seemingly harder attitude towards Islam but the next moment they melt and behave as M.K. Gandhi behaved towards Muslims and Islam. Such varying attitudes on the part of Hindu organisations are indeed confusing to the Hindu masses in general. It seems to me that if such a thing continues repeatedly a few more times, the Hindu masses will consider the hard attitudes of Hindu organisations as mere gimmicks having no steadfastness and teeth at all. This will be also entirely harmful to the Hindu Renaissance we expect in India.

1. Jesus, Mohammed and Allah cannot be included in the Hindu divine hierarchy until they cease to be exclusive. There is no animosity among the Hindu Divinities (33 crores). But the Christian God, Islam's Allah and Allah's last prophet Mohammed, do not admit any other as equal to them. They are jealous. The Ulema in the Madrasas of India preach this day in and day out. Christians consider Hindus as **Pagans** and Muslims consider them as **Kafirs**. So there cannot be a meeting point like including Jesus, the Christian God or Mohammad and his Allah in the Hindu divine order until there is a radical change in the attitudes of Christians and Muslims towards Hindus. Christians have shown a bit of change but Islam and Muslims have done nothing of the kind.
2. All religions do not lead to God and Divinity. Those Hindus who think that they should not criticize other religions are wrong. There must be a thorough debate and criticism of all religions. Everything (even the most minor beliefs of all religions) must be open to question and doubt and the adherents of those religions must reply to objections. If they keep silent about objections and questions raised about their beliefs - it will not at all be satisfactory. At present, they are politically a bit down, but we know from Pakistan and Bangladesh what happens when they attain majority. There are no spiritual practices in Islam (at least not in the Quran, the Hadith and the Sunnah).

²⁸ Settled at Roorkee in U.P. at present, the writer had observed the Muslim behaviour pattern from close quarters while living in Agra from 1942 to 1947.

3. If Islam is taken out of Muslims, they will probably be better men and women. Islam has made them fanatic. The whole of Islam needs a thorough reinterpretation for co-existence with other communities. There should be a radical reinterpretation of Islam giving it more inner orientation.

At present, in the thousands of Madrasas of India, the Mullahs (especially of Deoband and Bareilly) keep on dinging the students' ears and minds with the same attitude towards Hindus and Hinduism. If they could, they would still like to impose Jizia on Hindus and start treating them as they treat Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

I hope everyone knows how Hindus are treated in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. They cannot worship in their own individual way even privately, what to say of publicly. Hindu girls above 10 have to wear burqa.

In fact, it is Islam which should be thoroughly criticised - each line of the Quran, each part of the Sunnah and the Hadith - even to the extent of calling names in order to make fun of them. Muslims should learn to keep their beliefs (whatever they are) intact even if their religion is being made fun of, as Hindus have been doing for thousands of years. This way, if really there is something solid in Islam, all the fun which is heaped on it will not be able to shake it -just as the basic structure of Hinduism has not been shaken at all even by a thousand years attack by Islam and almost 500 years attack by Christianity.

Translations of the Quran, the Sunnah and the Hadith must be made available in all Indian languages along with thorough commentaries, so that people come to know what their real import is. The interpretation of these texts should not be left only in the hands of Mullahs and the Ulema but scholars of any hue should study them and freely discuss them. Sri Ram Swarup has written a small study, ***Understanding Islam through Hadis***, which is banned in India. Bigger and more books of this kind should be written in all Indian languages. Unless Islam is thoroughly exposed, people will continue to have a sense of the mystic in Islam, which there in none.

This is the only of way of taking Islam out of Muslims. It is Islam which is the main culprit.

4. If Muslims are told of their common ancestry with the Hindus, it does not seem to help. The teachings of Mullahs and Islam insist again and again that the period of a person or a community before conversion to Islam, was a period of *jahiliya* (ignorance). So after becoming Muslims, they have left their past of ignorance and now they have the new enlightenment and the exalted status of superior beings. They consign all their non-Muslim ancestors to eternal hell fire. They do not want to have any relationship with them except seeing them as Kafirs.
5. As pointed out in the pamphlet itself, it is the Muslims who used Congress and not the other way round. If BJP also treats Muslims as the Congress and especially Gandhi did, it will be a greater disaster than it has been so far. Muslims can be treated as human beings all right but

there should not be appeasement of any kind in the name of Islam.

It is true that the aggressive doctrines of Islam are partially kept in abeyance at the moment in India (because of a mild Hindu resurgence) but as soon as Muslims gain an upper hand the medieval Muslim history will be repeated with greater vigour - even a nuclear holocaust is not ruled out. India and Hindus must be prepared for this.

6. Among the Sufis exceptionally few can be counted as having peaceful intentions. Even they did not speak against the atrocities which were committed by Muslim sultans on Hindus.

The majority of Sufis were fanatic Muslim jihadists. They secretly and more often openly sided with the armies of Islam in destroying Hindus and their places of worship. Musa Ashikan was disciple of a Hindu Yogi in Ayodhya around 1528. The Yogi resided near the Ram Janma Bhumi at that time. Musa Ashikan used to come to receive instruction from the Hindu Yogi there. He used to feel the grandeur and power of Ram Janma Bhumi and had a secret desire to get it converted into a mosque. That he did, as soon as Babar and Mir Baqi came near Ayodhya - he incited them to destroy the Ram Janma Bhumi and got a mosque constructed at its place.

7. That Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims is partly true. But the fact is that the responsibility for this lies entirely in the teachings of the Quran, the Sunnah and the Hadith, i.e. the Muslim theology. Muslims are not supposed to mix with Kafirs, by making friends with them or by living in their neighbourhood. They should prepare all kinds of ambush for the Kafirs and kill them at the first opportunity. They should wait for the time when such an opportunity arises.
8. This is what Syed Shahabuddin has said in one of his letters to a newspaper and is plainly meaningless in the light of the teachings of the Quran and the practice of Islam through these 1000 years. Countless Hindu temples all over India have been destroyed and mosques erected in their places.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has repeatedly asked the, Muslims to hand over three sites (Ayodhya, Kashi Vishwa Nath and the Krishna Janma Bhumi) to the Hindus as a goodwill gesture. Shri L.K. Advani has confined the demand to only the one at Ayodhya. Knowing full well what the reality is, Muslims have not shown any gesture of the kind. The recent proposal in the Parliament to declare December 6, 1992 as a black day, in which the Muslim members joined wholeheartedly, is an illustration of their attitude.

No concessions should be made to Muslims now or in future. The prevalent ethos running the society in India must be and will be Hindu - which means that religion is a personal affair between the almighty and the individual. There should be no organized religion. Local Hindu organisations do celebrate Hindu festivals in small or big groups but that is a cultural matter and not religious.

Second Document

All the religions which have arisen in the Middle East, specially Islam, Christianity, Judaism etc. are monotheistic, prophet-based religions and are exclusivistic. Each of them divides humanity in two groups - one, the believers, and the other, the non-believers. The latter must be destroyed by the one chosen people. Israel has disowned such exclusivistic parts in Judaism comparatively recently. I think Jews are becoming more and more tolerant and so I think Judaism can now be excluded from the exclusivist theologies. But Christianity and Islam cannot be excluded because there is essentially no change in their attitude towards the so-called **Pagans** and **Kafirs**. Marxism, Nazism and Fascism, though not religions in the older sense are as condemnable. At present (till there is some perceptible change observed), the Sarva Panth Samādar March must include only the panths which have arisen on the Indian soil, i.e. Sikhism, Hindusim in all its varieties, Buddhism, Jainism and Indian Tribalism.

There is no sign as yet on the part of Muslims that they are prepared to be assimilated and that they want to live and coexist harmoniously with others in India, and even elsewhere in the world at large.

18. B.L. Jaju²⁹

I have received the circular 'Time For Stock Taking'. You have desired that the intelligentsia, particularly the Hindu intelligentsia, should offer their opinion about the ideology of Islam and how do they react to the same.

I am liberally educated, having an open mind, and have no prejudices or preconceived thoughts about any religion, much less against Christianity or Islam.

In my opinion Hinduism or Sanatan Dharma has a long history of toleration. They have never tried to see the darker side of any culture or religion, and have always tried to accept and respect the points of view of others. I think this is the reason why Sanatan Dharma has survived during the last five thousand years. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Godbole for asking the opinion and to elicit the Hindu response. I have read with great interest the tenets of Christianity and Islam. I am afraid that unlike Hinduism they do not allow any equality, much less respect for other religions.

Many of our thinkers, writers and commentators have talked of composite culture, toleration of Sufism and what not. It is only Hindus who mouth such pious platitudes just to cover up the shortcomings or loopholes of Islam.

I have no desire to give a long history or examples of cruel behaviour of the followers of Islam right from the hordes from Arabia down to Mr. Jinnah. It was just like the American policy, of Dulles: *If you are not with us, then you are against us.*

It is high time that Hindus should resolve and be resolute as to how we should react to the supine behaviour of our leaders who tried to placate and please Muslims by surrendering to all their demands including the demand of partition of India.

We all know how Bernard Shaw ridiculed the barbarism of Christianity when he wrote about sending troops to avenge the murder of a priest and taking the markets of the colonies as a gift from God. Similarly, H.G. Wells wrote about Islam and Mohammad Sahib.

In my opinion, during the last fifty years, politicians like Mulayam Singh or Kanshi Ram have tried to play the same tune to get the votes of Muslims. I am afraid if we do not act we are in for another partition of the country, and the intelligentsia whose reaction you want will be responsible for this.

²⁹ The writer is an industrialist living in New Delhi.

19. H.C. Joshi³⁰

General

It is a tragedy that the 3 different wings, namely, the BJP which is a political institution for establishment of Bharatiya (Hindu) Rashtra, the RSS which is an organisational wing of BJP, and the VHP which is a religious platform for Hindus, are not able to work in unison for a common cause - establishment of Bharatiya (Hindu) Rashtra, which is the need of the hour to prevent threats of Muslim rule, either direct or by proxy in the name of secular, democratic Bharat.

The three wings must look upon each other as supplementing the others, instead of each considering itself autonomous and independent. VHP's decision to pursue the Mandir issue and the Hindutva ideology and BJP's decision to abandon both are distancing Hindus away from BJP.

BJP's progress has suffered a setback by the greatest blunder - whoever be responsible for it - by demolition of what had come to be known as Babri Masjid. Not only did Hindus lose lives at the hands of Maulana Mulayam Singh, the Maulana is looked upon as the only well-wisher and saviour of Muslims. BJP has been isolated as one common enemy of all the political parties, be it Congress, Janata Dal, Samajwadi Party or the Communists.

The effort should be to unite rather than create rift, either ideological or otherwise. Political gain should be the sole aim irrespective of ideological differences.

Specific

No exercise on the Part of BJP to win over Muslims or Christians will ever succeed. The BJP, however, has the difficult job of defending Hindus against secularists' anti-Hindu policies without offending Muslims. BJP has to take up Hindus' cause for loss of lives of pilgrims in Amar Nath Yatra and of Muslim lives in the collision between Saudi and Kazakhstan aeroplanes. I was pleased to see *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* banner at Charkhi Dadri in Star Plus Hindi news on 14.11.96 at 7 p.m. Now that Faruq Abdullah is espousing the cause of Kashmiri Brahmins, rehabilitating them in Kashmir, BJP should either press the point to lend support to Mr. Faruq or to expose his lip sympathy. Let VHP make out a case for a grant of Government aid for Hindu and Sikh (even Christian) pilgrims on lines similar to that for Muslim pilgrims to Mecca.

On the First Document I agree entirely with Dr. Godbole.

1. The question is absolutely irrelevant and the thought is futile. Hindus cannot be more tolerant and the Muslims or Christians cannot ever be friendly with Hindus, whatever Hindus (or BJP) may do. What could Mahatma Gandhi achieve from Khilafat movement support?

³⁰ The writer is a retired IRTS living in Calcutta.

2. Islam or Christianity is not oriented towards search of God. It is aimed at increasing the numbers and rule the democratic world by number of votes. Only saints, whether Hindu, Muslim, or Christian, who have a spiritual goal, can possibly have different routes.
3. Muslim and Islam are inseparable. Each is as good or bad as the other.
4. Muslims are too fanatic to be educated. Even a Muslim graduate from Indian universities is Muslim first and Muslim last. He thinks of ruling over Hindus, as Muslims did before the Britishers.
5. Muslims indeed are a vote bank for they are united as one integrated whole. Hindus are divided and are being divided by self-seekers like V.P. Singh. They are being divided politically as Congressmen, Communists, Socialists, Secularists, and socially as Dalits and non-Dalits. Hindus have to be persuaded to come forward and vote to defend themselves, to vote in self-interest.
6. A Muslim is a Muslim first and Muslim last, call him a Sufi, Shia or Sunni. It makes little difference even if he sings songs addressed to Rama or Krishna. But this issue is totally irrelevant to join.
7. I agree that Muslim theology is responsible for the ghetto mentality. But why make it an issue?
8. True, Quran teaches, rather encourages, Muslims to break idols, destroy temples and kill the Kafirs.

On the Second Document, I have merely to say that for a Mazdoor Sangh it is not a bad idea to put up the face of *Sarva Panth Samādar Manch* or *Sarva Dharma Samabhāv*. Let not Dr. Godbole make an issue of it. It may be politically beneficent for a Mazdoor Sangh to grow.

20. Dr. S.D. Kulkarni³¹

Semitic Faiths are Political Creeds, not Religions

Since its inception, Islam is being practised as a political creed. It is not a religion. These two terms creed and religion are poles apart. Creed is a dogmatic belief system as propounded by a person who claims himself to be a prophet like the Jewish prophet Moses or the Islamic prophet Muhammad, or a super-intelligent person, or a thinker like Marx, next only to God. Whatever they say or do is the revealed truth. The followers are not to question, why? They have only to put implicit faith in what the prophet ordains them to do. They have no other choice. Religion, on the other hand, is a system of beliefs agreed upon by a group, particularly in the matter of worship of God who is taken to be the Creator. Religion thus is a mode of worship of the Creator.

Hindus haven't studied the tenets of Islam and Christianity deeply. They, therefore, consider these faiths as religions and project conceptions like *Sarva-Dharma-Samabhāva* or *Sarva-Panth-Samādara* and the like. Let us see what the fundamental tenets of Judaism are, for both Christianity and Islam follow the Mosaic belief system known as Ten Commandments. The first two are:

1. *I am Jehovah your God who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves. You must not have any other God against my face;*
2. *You must not make for yourself carved image or a form like anything anywhere on the Earth or in the Heavens or in the Water.* (Bible, Old Testament, Ex-20, 2 to 16).

The other commandments are ethical rules like the teachings of the Hindu Puranas. There is nothing to quarrel about these. The first two are further elaborated in Ex-34.12 to 16 by Jehovah, the Jewish God Himself: *Watch yourself that you do not conclude a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you are going. But their altars, you people are to pull down and their sacred pillars, you are to shatter and their sacred poles, you are to cut down. For you must not prostrate yourself to another God, because Jehovah whose name is Jealous, he is a jealous God.*

This is a political command. It means: "You and your group are exclusively chosen by God. You should not have any relationship with any other group with a different belief system. It is your duty to destroy the places of worship of the others".

In Ex-34.17 it is ordained: *You must not make idols of gods for yourself. Moses himself destroyed the idols made by his followers* (Ex-32.19 to 20). And Jehovah the Jewish God, forbade his followers to make any image of any god. It will be seen that in these commandments, there is no spiritual content at all. It is a hegemonic political creed in the name of religion, so devised as if it is God's word and directing the followers to put implicit faith in whatever is commanded. But the Jews were not proselytisers. They confined their beliefs to their group.

³¹ The writer is General Editor of BHISHMA, an 18 Volume series on History and Culture, and an 11 Volume series of Veda Translations. He lives at Thane in Maharashtra.

These two tenets are common to both Christianity and Islam.

Are these commands not criminal in content? Jehovah's covenant is with the Jews alone. Christianity and Islam follow these. But their position is different. They call for utter destruction of life and property of those who do not believe in the utterances of their exclusive gods and their messengers. Christian theologians would throw into flaming fire all the non-Christians including the Jews and the Muslims. Christians are against the Jews in particular, even though to them the Old Testament (the Jewish Bible) is **holy**. Similarly, Islam consigns to hell-fire all the non-Muslims including the Jews and the Christians, even though the Bible is its mother scripture. Islam is modelled on the Jewish Bible.

Thus Islam and Christianity exhaust between themselves the universe of discourse and throw the whole of humanity into the hell-fire. This way also, Islam and Christianity are not religions for under their laws all human beings go to hell-fire.

Islam shares all the above Christian tenets and adds to these its own exclusive tenets, viz. an open war-declaration against those professing faiths other than theirs. They regard the land where Muslims are in majority or the land where they are in power as holy Dar-ul-Islam. The land where they are in minority or the land where they are not the rulers, they regard as Dar-ul-Harb or sinful land. Their theology tells them to lie low in such situations or act as fifth-columnists. They have, however, to continue to strive till they convert the Dar-ul-Harb into Dar-ul-Islam. Can a religion with such war-like theology be on par with the other faiths which have no such declared intentions?

In such a situation, only the Hindus, who believe in *universal brotherhood* irrespective of caste, creed or religion as their fundamental tenet, would have a place in heaven. Their God's name is Sat-Cit-Ananda or Existential Blissful Energy or simply Conscious Energy, which is the source of this Universe constituted of human beings, animals and plants. Even inanimate matter springs from this source. The Hindu prayer, therefore, is **lokāH samastāH sukhino bhavantu** - let all people be happy.

Hindus are, therefore, the only people fit to be the inmates of heaven.

The Hindu confusion about *sarva-dharma-samabhāva* - all dharmas are equally honourable (dharma is wrongly taken as synonymous with religion) - is born out of misreading of the Semitic scripture, the Bible - Old and New Testaments. Religion is a mode of worship. Dharma means ethical conduct intended to hold human society together. It is a way of life, devised for the common good of all.

Without studying the fundamental tenets of Islam and Christianity, Hindus unwittingly call these as faiths or religions. Had the Muslims and Christians confined their belief systems to their groups alone, like the Jews, it would not have mattered much to the non-Muslims or non-Christians. But they are out to convert the whole world to their way of thinking. Even the use of the sword to achieve this objective is not taboo to them.

Are these illogical, dogmatic, exclusionist tenets not criminal in nature and content? Christianity

thus cannot be on par with the Hindu tenet of ‘universal brotherhood’. Hindus have no quarrel with the Christian God. For the Hindus welcome good thoughts from any quarter. After all, Muslims and Christians are human beings as good or as bad as the Hindus or any others. By discarding these criminal elements in their belief systems, they can become part of the Hindu mainstream. The experience of leaders like Gandhiji and others is that Christian and Islamic theologies prevent these religionists to accept the Hindu theme of *sarva-dharma-samabhāva* or *sarva-panth-samādara*.

Let the opinion-making leaders from the Muslim and Christian communities come forward with some proposal like *sarva-panth-samādara*, and then there can be some dialogue with them; to-day, it is a one-sided affair. We concede to these religionists whatever is not due to them in the belief that they would join the Indian mainstream, once we take the initiative and be liberal to them, for Hindus are a majority community. Unilateral gestures are considered as a sign of weakness by hardheaded politicians as well as religionists.

Christians are showing signs of opening a dialogue with Hindus. The elites amongst them feel that Christian tenets and beliefs are illogical and thus irrelevant in the present-day world where rationalism is fast replacing the old-fashioned belief systems. Islamic thinkers also are showing cracks in their otherwise solid front. The present generation of Hindus should not commit the same mistakes as their preceding generations did. On the other hand, they should conduct a sustained operation to educate the Muslims by persuasive but firm methods, pointing out to them what their belief system means. They cannot continue their old game of raising their demands whenever some demand is conceded by the Hindus unilaterally.

As I have stated at the outset, the Semitic faiths are political creeds and not religions. In politics, firmness backed by diplomatic skill pays. The liberal stance is considered as weakness. In such a situation, they close their eyes and ears and pursue terrorist tactics ruthlessly against Hindus.

Can BJP succeed where Gandhi failed? Gandhi was considered as number one enemy of the Muslims. If the Sarva-Panth-Samādara-Manch professes to have equal respect for all faiths, then this Manch would have to start a campaign against conversions. If Islam and Christianity are not better than the Hindu faith, then where is the case for conversion? Then why are Muslims against the common civil code? If the Islamic Sharia is better, let us sit together and discuss and adopt a common approach to all laws.

I agree with the approach of Dr. Shrirang Godbole, a young man from the R.S.S. ranks.

21. S.D. Laghate³²

I have come across the booklet *Time for stock taking: a swayamsevak speaks*. Since responses are invited on the opinions expressed therein, I am writing this piece. I fully agree with the views expressed by Dr. Shreerang Godbole in the booklet and I think concepts about Islam and Muslim problem should be made clear to every intelligent Hindu so that he may not be beguiled by propaganda which has gained authenticity and support from the powers that be.

However, with due respect to Dr. Godbole I humbly suggest as per the following. Some basic facts should be well-digested before launching attack on the Sangh Parivar on this account. Sangh was established to unite Hindu society. Dr. Hedgewar insisted on keeping its activities confined to that single objective with devotion. Whatever changes may have taken place in the recent years in Hindu society, the need to unite it has not diminished a bit. Dr. Hedgewar stated that all problems will be solved once the objective of Hindu unity is achieved. RSS should not waste its energy by going after solving one problem after another, dividing its attention from the main objective.

Islam may be, and certainly is, a problem with Muslims as stated by Dr. Godbole, but for Hindus it is a problem with Hindu society. Unaware of their own worth, Hindus are deluded to conversion by other faiths or to have high esteem for them.

Therefore RSS insists on arousing Hindus to value their own heritage and to judge other faiths and themselves too on that basis. Solving problems including Muslim problem, should not be given priority.

RSS wants to work for Hindu unity without creating enemies - *sarveshām avirodhen* - even among Muslims.

Dr. Hedgewar did not see Sangh as an instrument aliened from Hindu society to serve it. He wanted the Sangh to be one with the entire society and not a part of it. He never aspired to achieve a distinctive identity for the RSS as a service project or as the **Guru** for Hindus. He wanted the society itself to act in unison, taking inspiration from Sangh workers. Though Sangh is progressively attracting more public response, it should not get confused about its role.

This is the basic feature which distinguishes the Sangh from other Hindu organisations. A precaution in this approach is that workers should not waste their energy in criticizing their own Hindu brothers. Everybody has his limitations and failings. We should own him with all his limitations and failings, support him in his endeavours towards the cause and guide him to adopt better ways. According to Swami Vivekanand the most significant evil in Hindu society is that they do not allow their brother to rise, they pull his legs. They fight among themselves on flimsy grounds. Many a Hindu organisation have been working for certain Hindu causes, but they failed

³² The writer is an important member of the Sangh Parivar. He gives his address as that of the Vishva Hindu Parishad headquarters in New Delhi.

because they fell into the trap of correcting and criticizing fellow Hindus instead of concentrating on constructive work by gaining sympathy of the society in general.

Speciality of Hinduism has been that it accepts all varieties of thoughts, at the same time keeping in mind the only and the ultimate truth. It does not insist on specification but states the truth in terms relevant to the audience and occasion to command, first of all, respect from them, step by step.

Thus, we should speak about Muslim problem, whatever its dimension and intensity today, as one of many problems faced by Hindu society and not launch **jihad** against it, though Hindu-baiters try their best to instigate. Our arguments should address to the situation. Rigidly sticking to gospel is not the Hindu way. There is an inherent danger of losing grip on the main problem in dwelling on a single one separately.

RSS is in business to solve the problem of lack of unity in Hindus. Solving Muslim problem is not of that importance. RSS has to have only some approach towards Muslims and it should be inviting one, not arrogant. Without strong and united Hindu force, neither Hindu masses nor Muslims are going to listen to its rhetoric, and when Hindutva will gain enough force, nobody will dare to neglect its opinion. It is obvious that Hindutva forces have not reached such a stage yet. Let us not try to divert our attention from our singular aim, of gaining strength.

Dr. Godbole admits that VHP is trying to reconvert Muslims and Christians to Hindu fold which in theory means that ultimately Sangh Parivar believes in reconverting them to Hindu fold. If there seems to be some deviation in public utterances of RSS leaders they are for public consumption. It is an attempt to get foothold in conscience of the public still under spell of vicious propaganda. Writers like us are there to correct the impression whenever possible.

Hindu disposition is not for dividing people into two confronting camps like believers and non-believers, haves and have-nots etc. Hindu way of life is to create new vistas to accommodate variety of life-styles and opinions. They give a long rope and many opportunities to the inquisitor and believe that, if sincere, the inquisitor will ultimately come around to the right path. Therefore a strategy of four stages is envisaged: *Saam, Daam, Dand and Bhed*. We have to choose out of these four means, keeping the strength of our society in mind. Generally, leaders have unrealistic ideas about strength and weakness of society or they are highly adventurous. Such leaders have caused a deep scar on the confidence of Hindu society. Need of the hour is to achieve first and then talk about concepts leading to that achievement, not the vice versa. RSS leaders have shown remarkable acumen so far in this regard.

Whatever shortcomings of Islam and Christianity theoretically, they did not collapse within a century like Communism. If we know about their vulnerability and failings, we should also pay more attention to points of strength which have sustained them over centuries and by which they are still reigning supreme in the vast world today. Ignoring this hard fact will not bring us any nearer to success. Our strategy should be based on balanced judgement. They fight unitedly against enemy, though between themselves they are not exactly friendly.

Hindu is not beguiling, aggressive or cruel like them. He is known for his mildness because he is sure of his bearings and his staunch belief in the dictum that truth will ultimately prevail. Why should we act in a way derogatory to our nature?

The truth is that Hindus should unite to propagate the Sanatan Dharma. Let there be many ways of expressing it. Let us emulate their strategy, not their philosophy.

II

Shri Laghate had sent a copy his Response to Dr. Shreerang Godbole whose rejoinder is reproduced in the lines that follow.

1. Thank you for your letter dt. 6-12-96 and the copy of your response to *Time for Stock Taking* published by *Voice of India*. In sending a response, you seem to be an exception. I had sent copies of my booklet to all the state and local level RSS functionaries and some related intellectuals. They are all silent. It may interest you to know that I had sent a copy of my original letter (to Shri Sudarshanji) to Shri Dattopant Thengadi for his specific answers, with the additional question: if you truly feel that all religions are worthy of equal respect, will you advise the VHP to give up its campaign of *paravartan*? This *tallest intellectual of the Sangh Parivar* has not cared to reply! One cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hound. In his vague reply sent to me, Shri Sudarshanji seems to be rankled by my description of Hindu leaders as stubbornly ignorant and asks me how I reached this conclusion. Shri Sudarshanji's statement shows Hindu leaders in poor light. It simply means that they are deliberately misleading their followers. Knowledge is the cure for ignorance. What is the cure for pretence? In your covering letter, you say that as a swayamsevak, it is not right to raise controversy against the organisation. Let us be clear. The RSS is the means, Hindu welfare is the end. The means can never be greater than the end.
2. You say that the RSS is in the business to solve the problem of lack of unity in the Hindus and solving Muslim problem is not of that importance and should not be given priority. This line of thinking is simply incomprehensible to me. Could a similar thinking have been responsible for the inertia of RSS leaders in preventing partition of India? (The laudable relief work done amongst the refugees is an entirely different matter.) The Muslim (or Islamic as I see it) problem will not go away simply because Hindus are consolidated. It can go only with the demise of Islam in the hearts and minds of its adherents.
3. One need not be so overawed by the sacrifices made by Hindu leaders that one should shy away from pointing their mistakes. I myself have the highest regard for all the great sacrifices made by RSS leaders. That does not prevent me from showing their mistakes as I see them. Hindus have paid a terrible price for not questioning their revered leaders like Tilak (Lucknow Pact) and Gandhi. At least, these leaders could be excused for doing what they felt was right (though sincerity of purpose is no excuse for ignorance). Apparently, they had not studied Islam through its basic texts. But Shri Sudarshanji refuses to admit any such ignorance. You too say that some deviation in the public utterances of RSS leaders is for public consumption. I had been under the impression that saying one thing and doing another is a prerogative of Catholics and Communists (Islamists are honest in this respect). You seem to have contracted this disease from them. Thanks for correcting my impression. Nevertheless, do not forget that one day the mask might become the face.

I hope you do not take my bluntness amiss. I cannot help it. Mincing words is not my forte.

III

Dr. Godbole had sent to Shri K.S. Sudarshan a copy of his rejoinder to Shri Laghate. He received a postcard in which Shri Sudarshan said that ‘there can be different ways of analyzing and solving any problem’, and advised him (Godbole) ‘not to use harsh words towards those who might disagree’. Dr. Godbole’s reply to Shri Sudarshan is reproduced below:

1. I have received your postcard in response to the letter I wrote to Shri Laghate. I sincerely thank you for always taking time off from your busy schedule to reply to me.
2. I am however disappointed that you seem to be concerned with the style and not the substance of my letter. I shall be happy to change my style if that helps you to squarely face the issues raised by me.
3. The process of educating Hindus about Islam started as a trickle with Dayananda, Vivekananda, Savarkar, Ambedkar, Kurundkar and A.B. Shah. A seminal contribution has been made in our times by those two outstanding spokesmen for Hinduism - Ram Swarup and Sita Ram Goel. What a pity that not a single RSS name figures in this list! In fact, I do not recall a single *bauddhik* on Islamic thought-patterns (emotional talks on Muslim behaviour patterns can hardly be called *bauddhiks* in the true sense of the term). Is this not a subject for Hindu youngsters? What alarms me is that the RSS platform is nowadays regularly hijacked by *tablighis* like Mualana Wahiduddin who misguides Hindus about Islam and all it stands for. They are aided in their efforts by the pseudo-saintly *sarva panth samādarists* in the Sangh Parivar.
4. I wish you would not dismiss my questions by saying there are different ways to analyse and solve the Muslim problem. Granted there are different approaches. The question is - are all approaches valid? Was Gandhiji's espousal of the Khilafat valid? As a Hindu leader, you are expected to take a specific stand on Islam.
5. I pray that you give specific answers to the following specific questions:
 - a) Do you truly feel that all religions are worthy of equal respect?
 - b) If so, will you disown the VHP's *parāvartan* campaign?
 - c) If not, will you disown the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch?
 - d) If you disown neither, pray enlighten me as to how the activities of the two can be reconciled? This is beyond my limited intellect.
6. My questions may seem repetitive but I cannot help if you choose to ignore them. Sooner or later, the RSS rank and file (educated on Islam by *Voice of India*, if not by their own leaders) will haunt you with such uncomfortable questions. So it is no use ducking them.

22. Professor K. Lakshminarayana³³

First Document

With reference to Dr. Godbole's analysis of the eight conceptions of the so-called Hindu Organizations regarding the Muslim Problem, his first two responsive comments reiterate the fact that Cults of Uniformism masquerading as religions are bound to be imperialist aggressors.

Regarding the third conception - *Islam is good but Muslims are bad* - Dr Godbole has rightly reiterated that the difficulty resides in the Cult that is fundamental to the group consciousness of the Muslims. The problem, however, seems to be more complicated. On the one hand, there are the *Hindu Caste* Muslims (HCMs). On the other hand there are those whom the HCMs call *Musalmans* (MMs)³⁴. The latter appear to recognize themselves as foreigners and as erstwhile and would-be rulers. They tend to align themselves strategically with our Secular Progressives. Hindus will have to interact differently with these two groups, but interact they must. Healthy interaction with the HCMs cannot be based either on appeasement or on aggression. Before anything in the way of fruitful interaction can happen, Hindu Society has to get organically strengthened. The synthetic top-to-down organization is doomed to fail.

Dr. Godbole points out: *If Muslims renounce Islam, they will also become tolerant*. People, however, do not renounce things: they keep them for use. When their perceived security and other needs are better satisfied at some future date by aligning with the strong (i.e. the organically strengthened Hindu Society), the problem disappears. Shri Ram Swarup has rightly pointed out that when our Hindu National Society regains its prestige (by virtue of its strength), this alignment and return will automatically take place. The real problem is how to shake loose of the stranglehold of the secularist progressives on the one hand and that of those who have hijacked the Hindu card on the other. This latter comment does not refer to those who are working for the upliftment of our Hindu Society.

Dr. Godbole's response to perceptions 4, 5, 6 and 8 are very well taken, except to add that BJP itself has been moving towards being another Congress. People may prefer the original to the duplicate.

Item 7 calls for further comment. The response that the community's leaders are not the primary cause of isolationism needs more careful consideration. The leaders (MMs) sustain themselves on this isolation (of the HCMs). The former are to be bypassed. This can happen only when the *alignment with the strong* mentioned earlier takes place. The upper layers of the community see practical advantage in the separate identity of the community: nurtured by our Constitution and Realpolitik. When the advantage lies with alignment/return, no leader and no ism will really come in the way of younger generations. These will be intent on making good in this world.

³³ The writer lives in Chennai.

³⁴ Aghananda Bharati: Hindu Views and Ways and the Hindu-Muslim Interface, New Delhi, 1981, p. 90 and ref. to A.C. Mayer (1966).

Second Document

Dr. Godbole's comments on the *Sarva Dharma Samādar Manch* are fully justified. It is only necessary to add, with reference to his item 3, that there is one group of oppressors and a different group of victims within the same community. Developments such as this Samādar Manch are perhaps only an indication that the RSS is tired and apprehends failure on the political front.

Equality of Religions as Secularism

Several eminent and well-meaning people have been enunciating Secularism in the Indian context as *equality of religions*. Let us see the implications of this approach.

It must be clearly understood at the very outset that the term religion is used for two entirely different approaches to life. We have religions which may be variously described as uniformist, exclusivist, outer seeking, aggressively converting. There are, on the other hand, religions which may be variously described as pluralistic, inclusive, inner seeking, non-aggressive. This second variety reject the first variety as false and such repudiation is inherent in them, even though not put forward as a tenet. They cover Hinduism (including Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism of the Gurus), Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism and others. People of these religions see their religious cultures and spiritual approaches as having essentially the same eternal and true foundation. Equality of religions is thus inherent within this second variety. On the other hand, each religion of the first variety holds itself as the only true one and all others as false. This exclusivism is in fact fundamental to its existence. Equality of religions is thus fundamentally excluded by the first variety.

If Secularism is part of the basic structure of the Constitution as has been regularly emphasized by our higher judiciary and if, at the same time, Secularism is equality of religions, then there is only one way of upholding the Constitution in this matter. That is, the State is bound not to encourage the practice of/subscription to the first variety of religions. This is under a policy of benevolent neutrality. At least one member of our higher judiciary has taken the view that Indian Secularism consists of an active pursuit of the policy of equality of religions, benevolent neutrality not being good enough. In that case the State will have to positively discourage the practice of the first variety (if not ban it) and specially encourage the practice of the second variety. And it has to take positive steps to prevent discrimination within the second variety.

Persons occupying the highest positions in the land, such as members of the Cabinet, judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts and the Election Commissioners, have to take the oath to uphold the Constitution. That is, at least the basic structure and, therefore, Secularism. Even under a policy of benevolent neutrality, people subscribing to the first variety will not be able to take the oath. Their oath will be invalid without a repudiation of their current membership of the first variety of religions. They may of course commit fraud with the connivance of their communities, as a sincere oath will mean Apostasy. Much more simply, the oath becomes meaningless just like so many other oaths.

Equality of Religions as Secularism is, however, not the definition followed by most members of our political establishment and the Press. Their definition has long been made the clearest, even if not stated: encourage the first variety and discourage the second variety.

The recent apex court pronouncement on Hindutva essentially means, in my understanding, that the second variety, taken as a whole, is not a religion. That is of course true: it is simply Religion

with a capital R and without the article a. And it covers many who are not looking for any mystery or even enlightenment.

Most human beings, left to themselves, are automatically in the second variety. The State does not have to do anything in this regard. Its duty, on the other hand, is at least not to encourage uniformist and hence exclusivist creeds. These creeds include both the *religious* and the *secular* varieties. *Secularism* is thus a term unfit to be used to describe any liberal and humanistic policy of the Indian State.

It is also pertinent to point out that the doctrine of Neutrality of the State is a pernicious one. Only a Government by the Aliens can take that attitude or, as in our case, a Government by the Alienated. A democratic State must be imbued with the consciousness of the people and their culture and civilization at the deepest levels.

23. Professor K.S. Lal³⁵

Dr. S. Godbole's comments at a Seminar in Pune and his letter to Shri K.S. Sudarshan, published by the Voice of India in the form of a brochure titled Time for Stock Taking, raise issues of vital importance to the Majority population of Hindus in the country. There are many minority groups in India. But except the Muslims, they pose no serious problem. The Muslim position has been intractable both before and after Partition. I would like to react to points raised by Dr. Godbole in the sequence published in the brochure.

1. Many Hindus may extend their pantheon of gods and goddesses with the peace-propagating seers of Indian origin like Buddha, Mahavir and Nanak. But Christians and Muslims will never be prepared to join Jesus and Muhammad with other gods. Islam forbids inclusion of Allah in the galaxy of gods of any other religion. Muslims would not agree to such inclusion. It is Hindus who think in terms of such integration; Muslims don't.
2. It is true that it is against the spirit of Hinduism to criticize other religions. There are many reasons for this phenomenon. Followers of proselytizing religions denounce the religions of others to attract converts by creating in them a sense of hatred for their own deities. Hindus do not denounce other faiths because they do not believe in making converts. Besides, Muslims and Christians were rulers of the country for many centuries. It was not possible to criticize their religions during their brutal sway. Furthermore, Hindus did not read the Quran, the Hadis and the Sunnah because they were written in Arabic and were not available in translations. Now that they are available in other languages also, critical appraisals of Christianity and Islam are being made. Arya Samaj and Voice of India have done yeoman service in this regard.

All religions lead to God. But there is a difference between God and God, between the God of Hindus and the Allah of Muslims. Allah has his faithfuls and enemies. *And surely Allah will help him who helps Him.* The people of the faith are exhorted to fight Allah's enemies. In return they are promised a place in Paradise if they die; or all the material possessions of the victim if they survive in Jihad. Hindu God has no enemies in poor humans. He is a friend of all. He is kind to those who are His devotees and also to those who do not worship Him.

3. Dr. Godbole rightly contradicts the notion that *Islam is good but Muslims are bad.* He pertinently points out that Muslims minus their Islam are as good as any other people. It is Islam that brutalized them not only in its early years but for all time to come. Take the example of Afghanistan. When it was not Islamized, Gandhara was a great centre of art and culture. When it became Islamic, it took to violence. Today Afghanistan is being ruled according to the Islamic Sharia. And the whole world knows how it is being ruled. If the Gandharis or Afghans renounce Islam, they will become tolerant and may one day regain their old cultural grandeur.
4. Muslims know of their ancestry. They cannot unite with Hindus because their religion teaches them not to have any links with non-Muslims. Some are even shy of acknowledging their ancestry and seek extra-territorial origins by flaunting names like Qureshi, Bukhari, Sherwani and Tirmizi. It is well said that when a Hindu is converted, it is not a case of a

³⁵ The writer is a distinguished and well known historian of medieval India under Muslim rule. He has written several books, some of which have earned him international fame. Readers of Voice of India publications are familiar with some of his latest writings.

Hindu lost but that of an adversary added. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis know about their common ancestry, but in place of uniting with the Hindus, they keep busy in ethnic cleansing.

5. The BJP is following the Congress policy of wooing Muslims for their votes. Else, if the BJP treats Muslims as equals, and not as vote bank, where is the need of having a Minorities (read Muslim) cell as is the case with Congress or Congress Government. If the BJP continues with the policy of the Congress with regard to Muslims, it will meet the fate of the Congress. Tactical voting by the Muslims (who also exploit their position as vote bank) should serve as a pointer to the electoral arithmetic of the BJP. As Godbole points out, **it is not important how BJP views Muslims, but how Muslims view BJP.**
6. Sufis believe in Shariat, besides Tariqat and Marifat. Adherence to Shariat makes them as good or as bad Muslims as the others. There are no secular Sufis. An Alim and Sufi like Amir Khusrau denounced Hindus in these words: *The whole country, by means of the sword of holy warriors, has become like a forest denuded of its thorns by fire. Had not the Law granted exemption from death by the payment of poll-tax the very name of Hind[us], root and branch, would have been extinguished, or the Turks, whenever they please, can seize, buy, or sell any Hindus.* Amir Khusrau was a friend of Ziayauddin Barani, perhaps the most fanatical chronicler of medieval India. And both Khusrau and Barani were disciples of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya who is known as a great Sufi of the Chishti order. Chishtias are the most accommodative of the Sufi orders. Suhrawardis and Naqshbandis are Sufis of a different kind. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Walliullah were Sufis of this second sort. The latter considered Mahmud of Ghazni the greatest Muslim after the pious Caliphs. He invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India to destroy the power of the Hindus. And he is considered by Muslims as a leading light of Islamic philosophy.

Many Sufis participated in Jihad against non-Muslims. Maxwell Eaton's book has been banned by the Indian *secular* government because it gives a glimpse into the activities of the *sufi warriors*. Even Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti's picture of tolerance is replaced by a portrait of him as a warrior of Islam. (P. M. Currie).

7. I entirely agree with Dr. Godbole on this point.
8. As Godbole says, it is plain nonsense to say that Namaz offered at a disputed site (like Ayodhya) is not acceptable to Allah. All Hadises repeatedly mention that Masjids for Namaz should be built at places where idols (and idol temples) are. The idols at Taif in Arabia were destroyed to build a place of Namaz there. Hadises and Sunnah are witnesses to this phenomenon.

In his letter to Shri K.S. Sudarshan, Godbole has rightly stressed that Muslims should be viewed not only as oppressors (of non-Muslims) but also as the greatest victims of Islam. Muslims became oppressors as their creed directed them to fight Jihad with non-Muslims even without any provocation from the latter. They were encouraged to demolish temples and convert people by force. This they did in all the centuries of their contact with India (as well as other countries) from the time of Mahmud of Ghazni to that of Aurangzeb. The contemporary scenario in Pakistan and Bangladesh is no different.

But Muslims suffer equally badly from Islam's stringent laws. The Hadises advocate inculcation of

the habit of saying Namaz for a boy of seven; when he attains the age of ten, he should be beaten up if he ignores the prayers. Namaz and Roza are compulsory. Muslims keep a sort of watch on neighbours about these obligations, else it would not be necessary to put forward the plea of illness by those who do not observe Roza. About the punishments in Islam, the less said the better. Cutting of hands and feet, stoning to death of men and women, whipping women for sundry offences are still considered correct, if not actually practised in all Islamic countries. Many Muslims do not approve of such and several other practices in Islam. But they dare not speak out. If one in a million dares, issuance of a fatwa sends him into exile or hiding. Dr. Godbole is not right in advocating that Muslims *should be weaned away from Islamic ideology*. This is just not possible as the punishment for abjuring Islam is death. No Muslim would be prepared to risk his life for the sake of tasting the feel of freedom. His fear psychosis makes him aggressive towards the people of other faiths. He vehemently criticises Western Christian culture on the one hand and feels superior to the Hindus on the other.

That being so, as Godbole says, *it is no use repeating parrot-like that all religions are alike, and we should beware of ideologies masquerading as religions*. It is indeed time for stock taking. The only correct course for BJP and allied parties is to stick to its original programme rather than to borrow from others the policy of appeasement and cajolery.

24. Professor R. R. Mangasuli³⁶

No organization has so far found any solution to merge the Muslims in India with Hindu society. National Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party, Janata Dal and such parties have only succeeded in increasing the rift between the two creeds and making Muslims more stubborn. Muslims are like an idiotic son of negligent parents. Careful attention only can correct him. Muslim as an individual is quite accommodative like other human beings. He is fanatic when he poses as a follower of Islam.

Islam has spread through sword and coercion. It hardly cares for the human mind. Civilization in Muslim society is very poor. Tolerance is almost nil. That is why there are continuous wars and bloodshed in Muslim-ruled countries.

Muslims are always troublemakers for people having different faiths. Islam is not ready to accept any God other than Allah. Islam feels that everybody on the globe should accept Allah and only Allah as his God. The famous (?) painter Hussain depicting Hindu Goddess Saraswati in an ugly manner is a noteworthy example. Lack of education is the cause of intolerance.

The real solution to the ghost of Islam in Muslim mind is education for fraternity and coexistence. Muslims should be made to understand that other religions on the globe cannot be destroyed just by sword or gun. All faiths have to co-exist. Some learned Muslim scholars have understood this fact and they have merged as true citizens with other societies.

The concept that *religion is for the uplift of the soul and not for destruction of other faiths* needs to be inculcated in Muslim minds. Indian Muslims cannot leave India. At the same time, India can never become an Islamic totality. They, therefore, have to co-exist with others as people of other faiths like Christians and Parsis are doing. Hindus have many faiths among themselves. Even then rifts hardly ever come to the surface.

By a study of history one can see that the contribution of Muslims in general to human civilization is almost zero. Muslims still want to live in the medieval times. They waste their energy in coups, quarrels and bloodshed.

Understanding of Religion

Religion is a living force for a person. Man learns basics of life from parents, teachers, the surrounding society. What the mother is for a child, religion is for a person. One should not try to annihilate other religions; it is like snatching away the mother from the child. Through the process of learning, one can analyse and think of good and bad. One can improve and refine one's living through this process.

Nothing in this world is as pure as knowledge. Knowledge refines the attitude of man and he understands in a true sense as to what is right and what is wrong.

Muslims - Sick and Ill-treated Children

Muslims have fought wars and thereafter stayed peacefully with the people of other religions. It is

³⁶ The writer is from Karad in Maharashtra.

leaders, kings and fanatics who have used Muslims in the name of Islam for their selfish motives. Hindu leaders have coaxed Muslims on similar lines for their selfish interest. Today, every political party is trying to use Muslims for the party benefit by invoking the so-called injustice which has never been done to them.

State boundaries disputes and the Mandal Ayog exemplify the attitudes of selfish leaders. Congress, Janata Dal, United Front Groups are coaxing the people on caste and creed lines, thereby arousing hatred among them. Muslims are looked as vote-banks. Such selfish leaders and political parties can be understood only through the process of education.

Hindu Organizations should view Muslims as sick and ill-treated children of bad parents. Muslims should be caressed only with better education and not by giving concessions and temporary relief. Better family relations, respect for woman, freedom of thought, and basic understanding of human behaviour can make them real citizens. Muslims, therefore, are required to be educated with students of other faiths. They should attend the schools of Christians and Hindu Organizations. There should not be any special treatment for them as Muslims. Muslims can certainly improve through the study of science and humanities and not through Islam. They should be taught first to be human beings.

Almost all religions except Islam have accepted modern scientific approach. They have discarded old, impracticable and irrelevant religious customs. Muslims have to go in the same footsteps and become sensible and civilized. That will save Islam. Otherwise it is bound to crumble like Marxism.

Reactionary methods to improve or suppress Muslims will not succeed. Muslims are to be treated as human beings. They are to be made aware of freedoms, rights and duties. Unfortunately, Islam has not done this for its follower. Proper education will fulfil this job and bring Muslims into the mainstream with other societies. Gone are the days of war and supremacy. One has to live and let others live. Muslims have to come out of the fool's paradise that they will rule the world through coercion.

Sarva Panth Samādar Manch

Views of Dr. Godbole on Sarve Panth Samādar Manch are reasonable. Islam cannot be improved by bringing fanatic Muslim maulvis on the platform and asking them to respect others as we do it for them. Every religious leader feels that his religion is supreme. Bringing religious leaders on one platform will not improve Muslim minds. They will talk superficially to suit the Manch but ultimately behave as Islam tells them to do. Muslims are to be made to think. They should be made to analyse the situation. Reformists among Muslims should be encouraged to bring basic reforms in Muslim society.

By Samādar Manch movement, it is not likely that Muslims will come forward in real sense. For every man his faith is supreme. Samādar Manch may aim at fraternity and coexistence. To treat all religions on par is not acceptable to conservatives. Tolerance needs scientific and humanitarian approach. Samādar Manch may not succeed in refining Muslim minds because Muslims are blind followers. Anything that a maulvi says is supreme for them.

Instead of bringing religions on one platform, it will be useful if citizens from all walks of life are brought on one platform for the common cause of fraternity. It should be a non-political and non-religious platform with scientific and humanitarian goals.

25. T. G. Mohandas³⁷

Before going into the questions raised by Dr. Godbole, let us understand the stage where we stand and discuss.

In today's Bharath, a Hindu is a Hindu because his father is a Hindu. So is the case with a Muslim or a Christian. Generally, nobody knows or even bothers to know the guiding principles of one's own faith, leave alone understanding someone else's faith. Hindus go to temples, perform some rituals (of which they do not have any understanding) and claim to be devout Hindus. Same is the case with Muslims and Christians. Consequently, everybody forms an opinion about each religion from the occasional speeches they hear, stories that are being told, debates that appear in newspaper columns etc. This process brings out only the beautiful and acceptable facets of all religions because everybody wants to score debating points and entertain his readership / audience. In short, people are led by perceptions and not by truth. As such, everybody is offended the moment his religion's flaws are pointed out. This has created a situation in which one who tries to tell bitter truths is immediately branded as communal and fanatic. To overcome this, one is compelled to put at least a facade of 'Sarva Panth Samādar', or he will not be able to catch the attention of his target group. Precisely, this writer feels, this is the reason or logic behind the occasional utterances of Hindu leaders as outlined by Dr. Godbole. Nevertheless, I am sure that Dr. Godbole will agree with me if I say that no serious policy document, resolution, communique or publication belonging to any of the organisations of the Sangh Parivar, advocates any of the eight arguments. This writer had the good luck of listening to innumerable Baudhiks from none other than Param Poojaneyya Guruji to a not-so-learned humble pracharak who talks to a small group of five or six Swayamsevaks. I must categorically state that during the last 37 years of my life as a Swayamsevak, I have not heard a single Baudhik which prompted me to believe that Islam is in any way equivalent to Hindutva. However, the points shown by Dr. Godbole are occasionally heard in public speeches and therefore are to be treated as statements or overtures made to create a conductive atmosphere for a meaningful dialogue with Muslims. This writer feels that to save Muslims from the clutches of Islam, the Quran is to be discussed and exposed. For this, it is better to tell Muslims that we are ready to accept the Quran but have serious reservations on the preaching of Islam and Quran vis-à-vis Hindus. This could possibly initiate a dialogue and open-minded Muslims, howsoever minuscule in numbers, could be forced to read the Quran and ponder over the facts presented by us. Conversely, if we start with a head-on confrontation, that will invite only blind rebuttals and voice of reason will be lost from both sides.

Notwithstanding all the above, we must be very clear in our mind that the supreme goal of the RSS is not to expose Islam, not to have dialogue with other religions, not even to reorganise the Hindu religion to make it capable of fighting others. We do all these things as means, not as an end. Our aim is the Paramvaibhavam of this Nation. Param Poojaneyya Doctorji started organising Hindus because he felt that this is the only way to lead the Nation to Paramvaibhavam. All other things are questions of strategy which can be formed and modified depending on the context but without making any compromises. Our fight has to have many facets. While Prajna Bharati will take on the westernised anglicised, 'intellectuals', VHP will beat the Missionaries in their own game of conversion by performing 'parāvartan'. Forming a Sarva Pantha Samādar Manch is not contrary to this direction but definitely complementary. Samādar or respect of some idea need not necessarily mean that you agree or subscribe to that idea. How do we normally show our difference of opinion?

³⁷ The writer works in the Bharatheeya Vichara Kendram, an RSS organization at Trivandrum in Kerala.

Are we not starting with, “With all due respect to you, sir, I beg to differ with you?” This is only a sophisticated way of expressing total disagreement. So, I think we need not worry much about the literal meaning of words so long as we move in the right direction. And I have no reason to believe that, of everybody, Mananiya Thengdiji will take a wrong direction.

With this as a prelude, I will try to analyse the issues raised by Dr. Godbole.

1. *What is the harm in adding Jesus and Muhammad to the 33 crore Hindu Gods?*

Dr. Godbole answers this question from a Muslim point of view and his answer is correct from that perspective. I am trying to answer as a Hindu. Strictly speaking, a Hindu should not have objection to adding a Pepsi bottle to his list of Gods, leave alone Jesus and Muhammad, because Hindu Gods have attained all the qualities which they are supposed to have, through the attributions of Bhaktas. Hindus are free to create any number of new Gods by attributing the qualities which they expect from a particular God. Precisely, that is why Hindus worship almost every object they come across. But, there are practical problems in enrolling Jesus and Muhammad in the list. Some people have already attributed some qualities (which are arrogant and exclusivist in nature) to Jesus and Muhamamad. Therefore, even if a Hindu decides to accept Jesus as his Upasanamoorthy, that will be entirely a different Jesus i.e. a Hindu Jesus. This is quite absurd and will lead only to confrontation with the followers of conventional Jesus. As rightly pointed out by Dr. Godbole, neither Christianity nor Islam allows any other Gods because that will reduce the status of their God to one in 33 crores. In fact, Mr. Saed Naqvi, the well-known journalist, once told Shri S. Gurumoorthy that Islam does not allow picturisation of Muhammad because they are afraid that Hindus will apply a tilak on the prophet's forehead, light some agarbattis and lamps, and declare him as one among their 33 crores of Gods. This joke was narrated by Shri S. Gurumoorthy in one of his speeches in Kerala.

2. *All religions lead to God.*

Yes, all religions lead to their respective Gods. But, it must be understood that Gods as described in the Bible and the Quran are highly intolerant to those who do not follow them. This difference must be exposed.

3. *Islam is good but Muslims are bad.*

I fully agree with Dr. Godbole i.e. the converse is true. Muslims minus Islam are good. But then, what is a Muslim without Islam?

4. *If Muslims are told of their common ancestry, they will unite with Hindus.*

The Quran categorically prevents Muslims from uniting with any non-believer. A true Muslim can be loyal only to a Muslim country/nation. Whatever be the level of awareness about his ancestors being non-Muslims, a devout Muslim who abides by each and every word of the Quran cannot enter into friendship with non-believers. However, this teaching of the Quran is normally not publicised and therefore most of the Muslims are unaware of this fact. The fact being so, an earnest attempt through this line may prompt or rather embolden some of the Muslims to outgrow the heinous teachings of Islam.

5. *The Congress used Muslims. Congress treats Muslims as vote banks. We (BJP) will treat Muslims as human beings.*

The arrangement between Congress and Muslims was mutually beneficial to the leaders of both sides. The ordinary Muslim (who does not know what is Quran or Hadis) was not provided with even basic education. It is a must that we treat them as human beings because

their leaders treat them as slaves. A common civil code will show the Muslim male his right place and bring the Muslim woman out of her purdah. Yes, I fully subscribe to BJP's slogan - justice for all and appeasement to none. The tactical voting etc. will come to an end once they really go through the experience of honest governance.

6. *Sufis are tolerant Muslims.*

This writer has not had the opportunity to study the Sufi phenomenon and therefore would like to refrain from commenting on this point.

7. *Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims.*

Though Islamic theology is responsible for this ghetto mentality, it is the Muslim leadership which is propagating and perpetuating the same. An average Muslim who is not aware of the theology or who does not follow the Quran verbatim may not like his isolation. But Muslim leaders create issues out of nothing, create some sort of persecution-mania, and the rhetoric becomes so shrill that any sane voice is drowned in the din.

8. *Namaaz offered on a disputed site is not acceptable to Allah.*

Though I have no first hand information about this, going by the tone of the Quran it is quite unlikely. Quran openly advocates killing of the non-believers. So naturally it should have no objection to offering Namaaz at a disputed site.

I am not going into the question raised by Dr. Godbole on the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch because I have already put my opinion in the prelude.

Once again, I would like to humbly request all concerned to evaluate our movement in its totality. Analysing each event or slogan in isolation may not give us a correct picture. Over and above, we must appreciate that many a time it is not the truth but the perception about the truth that dominates the society. While we have to be committed to the core, it is imperative that we must be clever and dynamic enough to cope with the multipronged attack against Hindutva.

26. Professor S. G. Mujumdar³⁸

I entirely agree with Dr. Shreerang Godbole's view on the likelihood of confusion being created by the leaders of the Sangh Parivar, owing to its contradictory stances on its approach towards the Muslim problem. The Mantra of *Sarvadharmaśamabhāva* has clogged the mind of Hindu leaders for too long. Firstly, how many of these leaders who have interiorized this concept can claim to be aware of the tenets of Christianity and Islam which have time and again wreaked havoc on Hindu Society? Secondly, how many of the Sangh leaders can demonstrate the *Sarvadharmaśamabhāva* being practised by the Muslim Clergy and the Christian Missionaries? Thirdly, what is the logic of equating Hinduism with exclusive ideologies like Islam and Christianity which have never had anything to do with the spirit of pluralism, either in theory or in practice? Will the Sangh leaders care to find out in the spirit of *Sarvadharmaśamabhāva*, as to how many of Muslims and Christians who are presently touted as *secularists par excellence* will invite or install a Hindu God adjacent to their Allah or Jesus. Fourthly, how can Muslims and Christians, who have a tyrannical record in the past of subjugating the majority Hindus in their own homeland, be termed as a minority? Fifthly, if the leaders of the Sangh Parivar really believe in the equality of religions, why do they oppose movements of conversions and introduce movements like **Shuddhi, Ghar Vāpasī, Parāvartan?**

The first step towards seeking or evolving a solution of these problems is to use the same yardstick as the Missionaries did with respect to Hinduism - A Critique of these two religions i.e. Islam and Christianity. It is only then that we could arrive at an answer to the behavioural pattern and mindset of the followers of these religions. The second step would be to understand the history of these religions (both past and present) so as to understand their compatibility with pluralistic religions like Hinduism and Buddhism of India. Thirdly, the majority of Muslims and Christians who are otherwise past Hindus, should be made aware of the anti-national ideology of these religions. Fourthly, even from a spiritual perspective, the arbitrary, whimsical and thoughtless attitude of Allah of the Koran and Jehovah of the Bible will not appeal to any rational man, let alone the Hindus. Allah and Jehovah appear to be of Tāmasika Vritti while Hindus know their God to be above even Sāttvika Vritti, i.e. SaguNa-NirguNa Brahman.

The post-Independence history of Muslims and Christians should also act as a reminder to Hindu leaders that in the jingoistic jargon of Indian Secularism, they have been successful in labelling self-respecting Hindus as Fascists and Communalists. Muslims have always voted strategically, and are known always to pressurise government to accede to their unreasonable demands. The very fact that Hindus have to fight for their right to Ram Janmabhoomi, Mathura, and Kashi, proves that Muslims continue to exhibit their old hostility. The likes of Syed Shahabuddin, Banatwala, C.M. Ibrahim, Imam Bukhari, Gulam Nabi Azad, are in politics to see that Muslim interests at all times are acceded to on top priority basis. They are found nowhere when the question of Kashmiri Hindu refugees comes up.

³⁸ The writer is Assistant Professor of Economics at Indian Law Society's Law College at Pune. He is not a member of the Sangh Parivar but participates in discussions on Hindutva which are held regularly at Pune.

The concept of *secularism* has a special connotation in Indian context. In Indian Secularism, Hinduism can be scrutinised by everyone and can be railed against in the name of freedom of expression but the same cannot be done to other religions. That seems to be a taboo. Anyone trying to question the tenets of Christianity or Islam is a **Communalist**, and **Fascist** which perhaps is synonymous with olden time Heretic. The response of Muslims towards Uniform Civil Code, Article 370, Ban on Cow Slaughter etc., illustrates comprehensively their hostile attitude. The same is true of Christians also. Their secessionist activities in North-East India, their politics in the Dalit Christian Reservation Movement, their contributions in distorting the Hindus Shastras, and their international connections prove beyond doubt that both Muslim Leadership and the Missionary Network are working to a plan. The Hindu leadership who wish to guide the destiny of Hindus should display enough intelligence in understanding the modus operandi of these two proselytising religions.

The exercise of floating *Sarva Panth Samādar Manch* is a futile exercise. It is practising deception on Hindu society in the long run. Hindu leaders should act brave and call a spade a spade - that is the only way of awakening the Hindu society. The Mantra of *Sarvadharma samabhāva* is no mantra at all; it is a curse for which Hindus have suffered a lot, and it is high time we gave it a ceremonial burial.

27. P. R. K. Naidu³⁹

Thanks for mailing the small but thought provoking pamphlet **TIME FOR STOCK TAKING**. I very much appreciate your gesture of inviting the responses from the Hindu Mind.

1. The Indian National Congress from the very inception was not for the welfare of Hindusthan and its citizens, especially the Hindus and their culture, but for the unhindered continuation of the British rule. Pseudo-Nationalist leaders steeped in Western culture took over and gave the call of Nationalism, which was taken up by the common man and became a mass frenzied Nationalism, an outcome of the Westernised Indian leaders. This Nationalism is devoid of Bharatiya culture or well defined patriotism.
2. For such behavioural change and craze for everything foreign not only the power hungry politicians are at blame, but to a great extent our religious GURUS and PEETHADIPATTIS have also a share in Hindu degeneration, as they in their Pseudo Sagacious non-interference have taken for granted policies of the Political Hindu leaders at the helm of affairs.
3. The points raised by Dr. Godbole, are like the overplayed gramophone record - points put forward by the Pseudo-Secularists and misguided Hindus only. For them it has become a fashion, a mark of elegance and broad-mindedness. In all respects I concur with Dr. Godbole's explanations and add these suggestions.

The first question of including Jesus and Mohammad in the pantheon of Hindus, is like accepting their teachings of intolerance and bestial savagery towards others. It should be likened to a ferocious Tiger in a Pen of docile cows. If the second statement is taken for granted then there should not be any difference between good and evil, a saint and a rogue, a cultured one and a savage, and ultimately between God and Devil. In the fifth item, the BJP's claim of treating Muslims as human beings, which shall bring a change in them, is too far-fetched, like building castles in the air and as aimless as a shout in the dark. They have to first segregate them from Islam, which is the main culprit for dehumanizing them. For item six regarding Sufis, history - even the doctored one - is a witness to their treacherous pact with the invading enemies and the shady and shifty part played by them. The eighth statement is a blatant lie, and a forked-tongue remark. The Islamic sanctum sanctorum in MECCA itself was a centre of Idol Worship with as many as 360 idols. It was desecrated, profaned and misused as a Mosque for their namaz and made Allah's house. This is confirmed by QURAN, the Hadith and the Islamic Encyclopedia.

4. Regarding formation of SARVA PANTH SAMĀDAR MANCH by the Sangh, if it is intended to include Christianity and Islam in it, then the Sangh is stone-blind to the recorded facts and has not learnt any lesson from history. Let us not go far back in history, but take it from only 1885 after the inception of Indian National Congress and Gandhiji coming on the

³⁹ The writer is from Secunderabad in Andhra Pradesh.

stage. He had made Congress take a step forward with extended hands of friendship towards Muslims and Muslims had taken two steps backward to make it dance to their tunes. If the Sangh Parivar from which Hindus have great expectations also floats *SARVA PANTH SAMĀDAR MANCH*, expecting peace and tranquility then it is forcing the Nation into the vortex of diabolism. Dr. Godbole has correctly diagnosed that **what Hindus need today is not SARVA PANTH SAMĀDAR but SARVA PANTHA CHIKITSĀ**. I like to add that a Surgical/Shastriya Chikitsa is urgently needed for Hindu also. The Sangh Parivar has to rehinduise the Hindus, who have westernised themselves.

28. S. Omkar⁴⁰

I refer to the document *Time for Stock Taking*. I am surprised that the Sangh Parivar has been popularizing these eight slogans. Obviously, the leaders of the Sangh Parivar have not read either the Bible or the Quran. If they had read them, they would not be making such ridiculous statements. **With friends like these, Hindus do not need enemies.**

1. *What is the harm in adding Jesus and Muhammad to the 33 crore Hindu gods and goddesses?*

I do not know where this number 33 crore came from because even a language rich in vocabulary such as Sanskrit does not have 33 crore words. In any case, all the Hindu deities are different representations of the one God, and believing in one does not involve denial of others. Jesus and Muhammad do not fall in the category of deities. Also, according to the New Testament and the Quran, if one does not believe in Jesus or Allah (together with Muhammad) respectively as the only saviour, then one is doomed to eternal hell. If one believes in Jesus or if one believes in Allah (with Muhammad), then it is not permissible to worship any other deity. Therefore, Jesus and Allah (with Muhammad) cannot be included in Hindu deities.

Will the Muslims or Christians agree to include a Hindu deity as part of their worship?

2. *All religions (including Islam) lead to God.*

Why is it that only Hindus are asked to make this statement which indirectly implies that all religions are the same? Christians call Hindus heathens and some Christian preachers refer to Hindus as *devil worshippers*. Muslims refer to Hindus as *kafirs* and the Allah of the Quran exhorts Muslims to convert or kill all non-Muslims. The openness of Hinduism does not mean that we should teach our children the myth that all religions are the same when they are not. Also, if we do not criticize the faults of Islam and Christianity (obviously Muslims and Christians are not going to do so while they continue criticising Hinduism), then Hindu children get a mistaken notion that only Hinduism has faults. There is nothing wrong in telling the truth.

This type of statements which even Hindu preachers make (without having read the Bible or the Quran) soften Hindus for conversion to Christianity and Islam. If all religions are the same as only Hindus are taught, then what is the harm in conversion to another faith? Of course, no other religion makes this statement. They teach that only their religion is the right one, that all other religions are wrong, and that they must convert everyone else by hook or crook or even kill them.

3. *Islam is good but Muslims are bad.*

Muslims are the product of Islam and behave the way they do because of what Islam

⁴⁰ The writer is a Hindu settled abroad. He has asked us not to reveal his real name and address. We have given him a pseudonym.

(Quran) teaches them. One of the basic tenets of Islam is Jihad i.e. waging war against all non-Muslims with a view to converting or killing them. There are many verses of the Quran in which Allah asks Muslims to wage wars against non-Muslims. The manner in which Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan were killed and expelled at the time of partition was no accident. Muslims of Pakistan were following the teachings of Islam. Muhammad himself had treated the Jews of Arabia in exactly the same way.

I am not making any comments on the other five items. I endorse Mr. Godbole's comments and ask the misguided Hindus to read the Quran, the Sunnah, and the Bible before they make ridiculous statements of the type mentioned in this document.

Finally, while I am giving my name and address for your information, it is to be clearly understood that they are not to be published or revealed in any form. If this is not acceptable, then you may not publish my comments under my name.

29. Virendra V. Parekh⁴¹

Dr. Shreerang Godbole has issued a timely warning against cosy soporific slogans currently mouthed by leaders of some prominent Hindu organisations. His documents display clarity of mind and courage of conviction that is rare among Hindu intellectuals.

While one agrees entirely with the tone and tenor of the documents, some of Dr. Godbole's formulations need improvement. It is sufficient to say that the openness of Hinduism should not be misused to sanction those dogmas of other religious groups which breed exclusiveness, intolerance and aggressiveness. The quotation from David Frawley is not apt in this context. If the Muslims want to search for spirituality in Islam, the Hindus have no reason to object, however futile the search may seem to them. The Hindus should concentrate on fighting the politics of Islam and resist all ideological, political and territorial demands made in its name.

Dr. Godbole regards it as foolish to remind the Muslims of their Hindu ancestry. But it is a truthful and powerful means to wean them away from Islam. The enemy of the Hindu society is not the Muslim, but Islam. Just as Islam and its alien followers conquered our land, destroyed our temples and monuments, and killed and enslaved our people, so also they converted some of us to their own creed. In that sense, Muslims are the worst victims of Islam. They are descendants of Hindus who lost not only their political freedom, but also their ancestral faith and ways of life. This has happened not just in India, but everywhere. Even the Arabs did not accept Islam willingly. Early history of Islam testifies to this. To overcome their sense of shame and guilt, the converts were told that the pre-Islamic period was a period of darkness. Generations of Muslims were fed the same myth as an article of faith. Now they no longer feel the need to question it. The proper response to such a mindset is to show them that their pre-Islamic history was great and glorious, that their ancestors courted Islam either under duress or temptation, that they represent not the victors but the vanquished. For example, in the debate over Ayodhya, Muslims should be reminded that they are children of the Hindus whom Babar sought to humiliate and insult by putting up a mosque at their sacred place.

Probably, what Dr. Godbole wants to say is that Hindus should not make any political concessions to Islam in the name of common ancestry. This warning is well-deserved. Such a misplaced generosity has cost us dearly. A clever negotiator could ask the Muslims to behave as ex-Hindus. It is another matter that so far the Hindu leaders have been doing the opposite. It is heartening to know that there are Hindus who are neither cowed down by the Secularist onslaught, nor carried away by phoney and perilous liberalism of their leaders. Dr. Godbole deserves compliments for his hard-headed realism. May his tribe grow.

⁴¹ The writer is a talented journalist from Bombay. He writes mainly in Gujarati language. At present he holds a position in the Chitralekha Group of publications.

30. Hem Raj Prabhakar⁴²

I am replying to the issues raised by your brochure.

1. The doctrine of Islam is Unity. The Koran say that Allah is one and alone, without a second. In Christianity, Jesus is the Son of God, which means he is second to God. Thus other men cannot be sons of God and will go to Heaven or Hell for ever, not according to their actions but on the recommendations of Jesus. Muhammad will sit near Allah and similarly recommend Heaven for Muslims and Hell for Kafirs. He destroyed the idols in the Kaaba, and killed all persons who persisted in the pre-Islamic creed. It shows that there is no room for other gods in Islam and Christianity. Nor can Jesus and Muhammad be accommodated in the Hindu pantheon.
2. Hindu preachers proclaim quite frequently that all religions including Islam and Christianity lead to God. They quote the Gita in their support. But this is quite contrary to the commands of Allah as conveyed by Muhammad. A person may be very good, even godly, and engaged in the service of mankind. But if he does not accept Muhammad as the last prophet and the Koran as the only true revelation, he is a Kafir according to Islam. Maulana Muhammad Ali's statement that **even an immoral Muslim is better than Mahatma Gandhi**, supports my argument. Many verses of the Koran give graphic descriptions of Heaven and Hell. The merits which lead to Heaven include mass murder of people belonging to other religions, and abducting of other people's women. Christianity says the same.
3. Dr. Godbole has stated the truth very well. I should like to add that if Muslims are freed from Islam they may cease to be Muslims but will certainly become good human beings such as they were before conversion to Islam. If copper etc. are compounded with gold in more than the prescribed quantities, gold loses not only its malleability but also its luster; it becomes a hard metal. But if the proportion of mixture remains proper, it becomes better gold. The Arabs before the emergence of Muhammad were civilized people with knowledge of and devotion to God. It is no more than a fiction that the pre-Islamic Arabs were ignorant and debauched.
4. Telling to Muslims that their ancestors were the same as those of the Hindus, does not get us anywhere. I know it from personal experience, after having held a dialogue with my Muslim neighbours on this subject. They told me in so many words that the Koran and the Hadis do not permit them to join the national mainstream with Hindus. Islam, they told me, teaches that if an Islamic country attacks India, Muslims in India must help the invader. Muslims, they said, have to strive always to convert every Dar al-Harb into a Dar al-Islam with the help of Muslims from other lands.

⁴² Translated from a letter in Hindi. The writer lives in Phagwara in the Kapurthala District of Punjab.

5. The vote-hungry parties like the Congress, the Janata Dal and others, are always ready to please the Muslims. And the Muslims are not only fooling these parties for political gains but are also augmenting their power in India. They view this country as Dar al-Harb.
6. Adherence to Sufism does not inspire tolerance. Sufis, by and large, were not tolerant. It is only a few Sufis who exhibited a different spirit because they came in contact with some outstanding Hindu saint.
7. The Islamic view of God is really responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims. Muslim leaders have no opinions of their own. They mouth only what they have learnt from the Koran. The Koran contains no universal Dharma. That is why its follower committed massacres of people belonging to other faiths, and made converts by force.
8. I cannot speak on this subject with knowledge, that is, whether Namaz offered on disputed places is acceptable to Allah or not.

II

Coming to the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch, the only comment I can offer is that we should learn from the results of Secularism or Sarva Dharma Samabhāva as practised by the Congress. The policy has failed to change the mentality of Muslims. It is my considered opinion that we will do well by scrapping the Samādar Manch.

31. Baljit Rai⁴³

We cannot be sufficiently grateful to Dr. Godbole for having questioned the validity of a thesis advanced by the BJP think-tank and its allied organisations with a view to creating a constituency among the Indian Muslims who form barely 12% of the total population of India. The BJP brains trust has devised an agenda of which the eight formulations pointed out by Dr. Godbole form the core. Dr. Godbole has debunked each of the formulations with irrefutable and cogent arguments.

It is hard to imagine that anyone, much less the BJP which is wedded to the cause of Hindus and India, could have advanced an irrational, untenable and an unworkable thesis such as this. More than the Hindus, Muslims themselves will reject this thesis out of hand if not with utter contempt. This approach of the BJP also indicates total intellectual bankruptcy and abysmal ignorance of those who are supposed to know better. At the least, the BJP should not have overlooked its obligation towards the people (read Hindus) who had put their faith in it and in its ability to guide and lead the nation, not to indulge in such puerilities and mindlessness. The real problem is not the Muslim but the Hindu who has elevated his pusillanimity into a high grade philosophy of life which he is not prepared to give up at any price, even though it has cost him very heavily again and again. What is the problem with the Hindu? Here is Nirad C Chaudhry's answer: "By the time the Muslims established their rule in the country (circa 1200 A.D.) the old inhabitants of the country, i.e. the Hindus, had lost their vitality to such an extent that they became incapable of dealing with or even facing a situation if it was difficult or unpleasant. So they surrendered to any situation that was created for them by history and tried to be at peace with their conscience by banishing it from their mind with soothing words."

Is the BJP brand of Hindu any different? Does the BJP thesis not amount to mere soothing verbiage? Does the Hindu understand the Muslim psyche or Islam? A quote from another distinguished author, V.S. Naipaul, is relevant: "You have a real problem now in India. Very few Hindus know what Islam is. Very few Hindus have studied it or given it any thought. And you cannot appeal to Muslim intellectuals. Islam is a religion of revelation. The Prophet's revelations are final. The laws have been all issued. Other societies adapt as the need arises, as traditions change, as the world changes. You adopt new attitudes to crime and deviance. This constant re-assessment is impossible in Islam. All that you can do is to re-interpret the Prophet's decrees. This is one reason why on the Muslim side reforms are not talked about much. If someone says we have to rethink, the believer would say, how dare you? You can be a reformist in Hindu tradition and you will not be considered a heretic. But any Muslim who talks about reforms in a fundamental way will commit heresy. It was so in Christianity at the time of Galileo. It is an immense intellectual problem for the educated Muslims of India."

So, the tragedy of the Hindu is twofold. Firstly, he has lost the vitality to live a life in which his self-

⁴³ The writer is a retired IPS officer, now settled in Chandigarh. He has written several books with which readers of Voice of India publications are familiar.

respect, self-esteem and dignity is assured. Secondly, he does not understand the true nature of either Christianity or Islam, not even such despicable terms as Heathen, Kafir and Dar-ul-Harb which directly concern him.

Of all the formulations the one which astounds the most is the one mentioned at No. 5 which reads, “*Congress used Muslims. We (BJP) will treat Muslims as human beings.*” The implications of this formulation are extremely damaging to the Hindus and the cause of Hinduism. It presumes that Muslims in India are being maltreated and that they are not getting a fair deal even in secular India. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Apart from giving the Muslims an undeserved opportunity to malign India as a nation practising the worst kind of discrimination against them, namely, that they have not been treated as human beings, this formulation also hides the fact that the boot is on the other foot. In reality, it is the Hindus, though in majority, who have been at the receiving end at the hands of the Muslim minority, throughout history. Let us consider the record of Muslim violence against Hindu in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India after 1947. There is no need to go back to earlier centuries because the blood-stained history of Muslim rulers is much too well known. We shall also consider the present day attitude of the Muslims towards the Hindus and India, and the position of Hindus vis-à-vis Muslims or Hinduism versus Islam in the Indian sub-continent.

Since 1947, the Muslims have subjected the Hindus to repeated genocide which has permanently altered the demographic status of the Hindus to their everlasting disadvantage with potential for faith erosion.

The first genocide of Hindus and Sikhs in West Pakistan was carried out and completed in less than three months in 1947 with unprecedeted butchery and thoroughness. Lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs were slaughtered and millions of them driven out of their centuries-old hearths and homes. The cataclysmic results of this terrible **ethnic cleansing** of Hindus and Sikhs were momentous in more ways than one. Firstly, Hinduism and Sikhism disappeared from the western wing of the newly constituted state of Pakistan. Secondly, West Pakistan became a single-religion country. One could understand the secular intellectuals deliberately closing their eyes to these horrendous realities, but why the BJP?

The second genocide of Hindus was organised and masterminded by the Muslims in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The Hindu minority which constituted 30% of the total population of East Pakistan in 1947, though not **ethnically cleansed** instantly like the Hindus and Sikhs in West Pakistan, became victim of a different kind of genocide which was even worse in terms of savagery and barbarism. This was genocide by slow haemorrhage. The Islamic terrorists in Bangladesh (in fact the entire nation practised terrorism against Hindus) resorted to riots actively engineered by the government, and went on with bloodshed, destruction and forcible occupation of Hindu property, abduction and rape of Hindu women, enforcement of Islamic laws which were utterly unjust, and denial of civil and human rights which left no options for the Hindus but to either convert to Islam or migrate to India and rot on the streets of Calcutta. The Muslims of East Pakistan practised the worst kind of Islamic terrorism towards the Hindus. Consequently, Hindu population in East Pakistan/Bangladesh has been reduced from 30% in 1947 to less than 10% in 1991. This unending diaspora which began in 1947, culminated in the unprecedented migration of ten

million Hindus to India in 1971 when Pakistan was caught in the throes of a bloody civil war which led to the break up of the country and emergence of Bangladesh as an independent Islamic state. What did those millions of Hindu migrants, refugees experience in the camps in India? The quality of life in those camps was by all standards subhuman and the number of refugees dying of hunger, fatigue, malnutrition, exhaustion and diseases of all kinds was so large that when a camp commandant was asked as to what he needed most to run his camp, his reply was - a crematorium! Such were the consequences of this interminable genocide of Hindus. But did this genocide end with the termination of the civil war in Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh? No. The stone of Islamic fundamentalism never stops grinding the non-Muslims (Hindus in particular) into dust. The pogrom of Hindus in Bangladesh continues unabated.

Now we come to the third genocide of Hindus which has been carried out as ruthlessly by the Muslims in Kashmir (a part of India) as in Islamic Pakistan and Bangladesh. Kashmiri Hindus (commonly known as Kashmiri Pandits) were barely 3.95% and living in the midst of Muslims who constituted 94.6% of the total population of the Kashmir Valley. They were a tiny minority and posed no threat to the Muslims. Yet they have been **ethnically cleansed** after being subjected to the usual **Islamic treatment** and now they too are languishing in refugee camps. Not a single secular saint (*read devil*) in India has shed a tear for these Hindus living miserably in filth and poverty. Is the Hindu destined to suffer indignities and other horrors at the hands of Muslims? It seems so.

These three genocides have had devastating effect on the demographic status of Hindus in the Indian sub-continent. These are:

1. Firstly, Hinduism and Sikhism have totally disappeared from 9,56,040 sq. km. area of the Indian sub-continent (Pakistan 7,96,095 sq. km., Bangladesh 1,44,000 sq. km. and Kashmir Valley 15,095 sq. km.). This area is approximately 1/4th of the area of pre-Partition India.
2. Secondly, in terms of territorial spread, Islam occupies the top slot and Hinduism has been relegated to the second position in the Indian sub-continent. While Islam is flourishing in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, Hinduism is confined to India only.
3. Thirdly, while Pakistan and Bangladesh are exclusively meant for the Muslims, in India Muslims are the shareholders along with the Hindus and others. Thus the Muslims are having the cake and eating it too.

Here is the demographic profile of Hindus and Muslims in the Indian sub-continent which should be cause for serious concern to every Hindu:

	Hindus	Muslims
India	700 million	120 million
Pakistan	nil	130 million
Bangladesh	10 million	130 million
Total	710 million	380 million

Thus for 710 million Hindus there are 380 million Muslims or less than 2 Hindus for 1 Muslim in the Indian sub-continent. How long will the Hindus be able to maintain this ratio? Not for very

long. But our secular angels (read demons) would protest and say without questioning these figures that Hindus in India are 80% and Muslims only 12%, so where is the danger? Yes, where is the danger indeed?

The problem with our secular saints and angels is that they were blind in 1947 and they continue to be blind even in 1997 after a lapse of fifty years. They did not see the threat of Islamic genocides looming large over India in 1947, and they cannot see the threat emanating from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indian Muslims today.

Now let us have a look at the extraordinary arrogance of Indian Muslims who had supported the cause of Pakistan wholeheartedly prior to 1947. In the elections held in 1946, the Muslim League led by Jinnah won all the 30 Muslim seats in the Central Assembly and 427 out of the 507 Muslim seats in the Provincial legislatures. The North-West Frontier Province was the only exception where the Congress-Red Shirt alliance came to power. Thus, by the logic of voting and massive support to the cause of Pakistan, the Indian Muslims forfeited their right to live in India after Partition on 15th August 1947. Thus they should have, on their own, migrated to Pakistan. But they did not. The extraordinary spirit of humanity that was extended to them by the Hindus, who allowed them to continue to live in India as equal citizens, drew little appreciation from the Muslims. Ingratitude towards infidels is fundamental to Muslim psyche and character. Now, fifty years later, the Indian Muslim has become as arrogant as he was before 1947 and carries his Islamic haughtiness right on his collars. He stubbornly refuses to be a part of the Indian nation as the following would show:

1. The Indian Muslim has not accepted any part of India's Constitution except that relating to fundamental and minority rights.
2. He has outright rejected the Common Civil Code for the nation.
3. He has rejected Vande Mataram which is our national song.
4. He does not accept Hindi as the national language even in Hindi speaking states. His preference is invariably for Urdu.
5. He has never condemned the ethnic cleansing of Hindus in the Kashmir Valley.
6. He has never condemned Muslim infiltration from Bangladesh. In fact, he tacitly supports the cause of illegal Bangladeshi infiltration because this adds to his numerical strength and political clout in the country.
7. He refuses to accept the fact that there is no such thing as the Muslim Ummah except as an anti-Hindu Front. If there was such a thing, why has Saudi Arabia expelled thousands of Bangladeshi nationals who are all Muslims? Again, why has Pakistan refused to accept eight lakh Bihari Muslims who are languishing in camps in Bangladesh since 1971?

The plain and simple truth about the Indian Muslim is that he is a blackmailer par excellence. He blackmailed the nation before 1947 and he is blackmailing the nation today. Why has all this escaped the notice of the BJP think-tank? Ideologically, religiously, politically and socially, it is the Muslims who have treated the Hindus, despite the latter's larger number, as less than human beings throughout history. It is the absence of this realisation and truth in the BJP thesis which is astounding. On the contrary, it plans to treat the Muslims as human beings, perhaps for the sake of their votes. What a travesty of historical and present-day realities relating to Muslims in India!

Every Hindu must consider the entire gamut of Muslim atrocities on Hindus from the time of Muhammad bin Qasim in the early eighth century down to Muslim League's genocide of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan from August 1947 to September 1947. In the intervening centuries - from the eighth to the twentieth - there was no respite for the Hindus from Islamic atrocities. Hindus did not escape this fate even during the British rule.

What is it that explains such terrible animus on the part of Muslims against Hindus called idolators? The answer is simple and straight. The fault lies not so much with Muslims as with Islamic theology, which, according to Muslims, is revelatory and hence cannot be changed, modified or amended. Any such attempt would mean heresy which would invite the penalty of death. It is this aspect of Islamic theology which has completely escaped the notice of the BJP think-tank while drawing up a new charter for integrating Islam with Hinduism. Let us, therefore consider some of the notable verses in the Quran which provide necessary sanction for shedding the blood of non-believers.

1. In 9:29, Allah resorts to swearing: *The Unbelievers are impure and their abode is hell.*
2. *On unbelievers is the curse of Allah* (2: 161).
3. *Allah is an enemy to unbelievers* (2: 98).
4. *Allah mocks the unbelievers* (2: 15).
5. *Unbelievers are the enemies of Allah and they will roast in hell* (41: 14).
6. *Muslims are the best of all nations* (3: 110). Thus they are superior people, entitled to dominate the rest of the mankind.
7. *O Ye who believe! Murder those of the disbelievers and let them find harshness in you* (9: 123).
8. *Humiliate the non-Muslims to such an extent that they surrender and pay tribute* (9: 29).
9. *Certainly Allah is an enemy to the unbelievers* (2: 60).
10. *Allah has cursed the unbelievers and proposed for them a blazing hell* (33: 60).
11. *O Believers! do not make friends with the Jews and Christians whoso of you makes them his friend is one of them* (5: 55).
12. *Muslims are harsh against the unbelievers, merciful to one another* (48: 25).
13. *Fight against them until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme* (2: 193).
14. *Make war on them until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme* (8: 39).
15. *Fighting is obligatory for you, much as you dislike it. But you may hate a thing although it is good for you, and love a thing although it is bad for you. Allah knows, but you do not* (2: 216).
16. *Believers! Make war on the infidels who dwell around you. Let them find harshness in you* (9: 123).
17. *O Prophet! Make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal sternly with them. Hell shall be their home, evil their fate* (66: 9).
18. *Prophet! Make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrisies. Be harsh with them. Their ultimate abode is Hell, a hapless journey's end* (9: 73).
19. *O Prophet! Exhort the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast men among you, they shall rout a thousand unbelievers, for they are devoid of understanding* (8: 65-66).
20. *Muhammad is Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another. Through them Allah seeks to enrage the unbelievers* (48:29).
21. *Allah will humble the unbelievers. Allah and His apostle are free from obligation to the idol-worshippers. Proclaim a woeful punishment to the unbelievers* (9: 2-3).

22. When the sacred months are over slay the idol-worshippers wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush everywhere for them. If they repent and take to prayer and pay the alms-tax, let them go their way. Allah is forgiving and merciful (9:5).
23. We renounce you (i.e. the idolaters): enmity and hate shall reign between us until you believe in Allah only (60.4).
24. Allah and His apostle pose no trust in idolaters (9: 7).
25. The basest creatures in the sight of Allah are the faithless who will not believe (8: 55).
26. Believers! Do not befriend your fathers or you brothers if they choose disbelief in preference to faith. Wrong-doers are those that befriend them (9: 23).
27. Believers! Know that the idolaters are unclean (9: 28).
28. Therefore, we stirred among them (i.e. the Christians) enmity and hatred, which shall endure till the Day of Resurrection, when Allah will declare to them all that they have done (5: 14).
29. Unbelievers are those who declare: "Allah is the Messiah (i.e. Christ), the son of Mary." Say: "who could prevent Allah from destroying the Messiah (i.e. Christ), the son of Mary, together with his mother and all the people of the earth?" (5: 17).
30. The unbelievers among the people of the Book (i.e. Christians and Jews) and the pagans shall burn for ever in the fire of Hell. They are the vilest of all creatures (98: 5 1).
31. Garments of fire have been prepared for unbelievers. Scalding water shall be poured upon their heads, melting their skins and that which is in their bellies. They shall be lashed with red hot iron (22: 19-22).
32. Tell the unbelievers that if they mend their ways (i.e. embrace Islam) their past shall be forgiven: but if they persist in sin (i.e. idol-worshipping) let them reflect upon the fate of their forefathers (8: 38).
33. **I shall cast terror into the hearts of the infidels. Strike off their heads, maim them in every limb** (8: 12).
34. We shall say, "Lay hold of him and bind him. Burn him in the fire of Hell, then fasten him with a chain seventy cubits long. For he did not believe in Allah, the Most High" (8: 15-18).
35. Do not yield to the unbelievers, but fight them strenuously with this Koran (25: 52).

A reading of the above directives from Allah leaves no doubt that so far as non-Muslims or non-believers are concerned, the Quran is not a religious book at all but a war manual and a penal code. This aspect of the Quran does not seem to have drawn sufficient attention or appreciation of the BJP think-tank; had it done so there is little doubt that it would have realised the impossibility of the task of incorporating Muhammad as one of the Gods or Avatars of the Hindu pantheon.

Does Hinduism have the equivalent of warlike terms like Ghanima, Mujahid, Shahid, Jizya, Zimmi, Jihad, Dar-ul-Islam, Dar-ul-Harb, Ghazi etc. in any one of its scriptures? None at all. The Quran, which is said to be a revealed book with the master copy lying in the custody of Allah in high heavens, is replete with these terms. How can these terms be homogenised with Hinduism?

The very attempt of the BJP think-tank is not merely puerile and naive but egregiously childish. The same goes for Christ whom the Christians claim to be the only son of God and one who, two thousand years ago, atoned for the sins of all humanity before and after him. How stupid and ridiculous! Christians may have some religious compulsions to implicitly believe in the dogmas but no Hindu can do so.

The utter impactibility of the eight formulations also comes into high relief when we consider these in the context of demographic status of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and other religions in the world.

Compared with Christianity and Islam, which are spread over several countries, Hinduism is confined to just one or two countries. Why? The BJP think-tank must provide answer not only to this question but also whether its formulations are the right answers to the challenges posed by Christianity and Islam to Hinduism. I, for one, would not buy the thesis of the BJP think-tank.

However, the year 2000 of the Christian Calendar is only three years away. It is just the appropriate time to cogitate over the miseries and misfortunes that we Hindus suffered first at the hands of the Islamic imperialism and then the Christian-Western colonialism, and what we can or should do to recover our amour-propre. As a number of leading lights among Hindus think and propagate that the 21st century and future belongs to Hindus and Hinduism, one would like to know how? Mere expression of wishes is not enough.

In my exposition I have largely confined myself to formulations Nos. 3 and 5 only. So far as other formulations are concerned, they are merely offshoots of the two discussed above. In respect of these also I fully agree with the views of Dr. Godbole. Will the BJP think-tank care to have a second look at its own thesis?

32. Dr. H. Ramarao⁴⁴

Thanks for sending the booklet *Time for Stock Taking*. I have noted that the author has shown his utmost concern regarding the **Hindu-Muslim** problem nagging the country even after partition in a new form, i.e., Secularism vs. Communalism, and the Congress policy of appeasement of Muslims going on merrily as before with help of its allies (Communists, Casteists and Communalists) to the detriment of the Majority community. If the trend is not checked immediately, the country may go for a few *mini* partitions, to accommodate a few miniature Pakistans here and there.

Dr. Shreerang Godbole has raised many important questions regarding the survival of Hindus and Hinduism, and they require the attention of everyone who wants to preserve the social, cultural and national interests of Bharat. Here are my views on the points raised by him.

1. *What is the harm in adding Jesus and Muhammad to the 33 crore Hindu Gods and Goddesses.*

Dr. Godbole is right in stating that Islam and Christianity reject all other Gods except their own, and that there is no sense in adding them to the Hindu Pantheon. Allah and Jesus Christ won't tolerate others' Gods as they reject the belief that all Gods are manifestations of the one and the only Supreme Being.

2. *All religions (including Islam) lead to God.*

Yes, this is the view of Hindus as propounded by our preceptors (i.e., sages) and expounded in the four Vedas. But the Semitic religions (esp. Islam and Christianity) reject this view outright and insist that their religions alone lead to their respective Gods. It is incumbent on their followers to destroy the *other* Gods, so that the whole world comes under the spell of their religion (Gods). It is important here to note that they are not ready to give this *right* of destruction of other Gods to Kafirs (i.e., Hindus). It is *one way traffic* for others.

3. *Islam is good, but Muslims are bad.*

Here also, Dr. Godbole is right in saying that Muslims are bad because of Islam, which teaches its followers to hate other religions, and gives specific commands to destroy **them**, lock, stock and barrel. This is being taught in all the Madrasas even today, where children are educated about the *important* aspects of Islam. So when they become adults, they exhibit this tendency whenever there is a riot, or a procession of a Hindu deity on the thoroughfares. It is this mindset that makes Muslims demand a separate state exclusively for their own use, bereft of Kafirs.

4. *If Muslims are told of their common ancestry they will unite with the Hindus.*

This is the presumption of Hindu leaders, who are ignorant of KORAN (holy book of Islam). It is a sort of wishful thinking, a day-dream, a hallucination. For Muslims, the pre-Islamic period is a period of darkness (*Jâhiliya*). The Koran especially asks its followers to sever all pre-Islamic connections, (i.e., social, cultural, familial, religious, etc.) and stick to the tenets of Islam (read Koran). Pray, how many Muslims claim that their ancestors were Hindus and that they are proud of it? Even the Prophet cursed his parents for not accepting Islam, and prophesied that they would go to hell.

⁴⁴ The writer is from Paramakudi in Tamil Nadu.

5. Congress used Muslims. Congress treats Muslims as vote banks. We (BJP) will treat them as human beings.

Muslims used Congress to achieve their goal (i.e., Pakistan) because they never considered Bharat as their Motherland, and had no compunctions in dividing it. For them, their Motherland (or Fatherland) was (is) outside Bharat. They behaved as if they were the mercenaries of Arabia and fought for its religion and culture here. Even now, if it rains in Arabia (or some other Muslim country), they open their umbrellas here. They are the paid agents of oil-rich Arabs, and do their biddings for a pot of gold. So whatever the BJP does for them, does not bind them a wee bit, and they will not hesitate to cut their fellow countrymen as they are all Kafirs, fit for elimination from this earth.

6. Sufis are tolerant Muslims.

This is the greatest hoax that is still doing its rounds in this country. Hindus are gullible, and anybody with a beard and a rosary in hand suffices for veneration. This is what the Sufis did and the gullible Hindus prostrated before them seeking their blessings etc. Actually, they were the clever minstrels of Islam, in the garb of piety, bhakti etc. to attract the gullible Hindus to their fold. Can anybody tell of one Sufi who propagated the great truth that all roads lead to the one and the only Supreme Being, that Ishwar and Allah are the same, and that there is no necessity for conversion. They were the fiercest preachers of Islam under the patronage of Muslim kings, and resorted to largescale conversions and Hindu-baiting. They were the wolves in the garb of goats.

7. Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims.

No. It is Islam that is responsible for this mentality to develop in Muslims. Islam teaches them to be *away* from *Non-Muslims* (i.e., Kafirs - Hindus) in matters of social intercourse, commerce and cultural activities. Kafirs are a hated lot in the Koran which advises Muslims to be away from Kafirs and to live in ghettos so that they can show that they are different from the Kafirs. Why not read the Koran?

8. Namaz offered in a disputed site (like Ayodhya) is not acceptable to Allah.

This is a misconception. Muslims never bothered about it. Because the Prophet himself occupied Mecca (a Pagan site till then, with a lot of idols) after destroying all the idols and then ordered his followers to offer prayers to Allah. He set a role model for his followers to follow. The Indian Muslims during the course of a millennium destroyed thousands of temples (including Somnath, Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi) and built mosques and offered prayers. According to the Koran the destruction of Kafirs' temples is one of the pious acts that pleases Allah most.

Sarva Panth Samādar Manch

1. If it includes only non-Semitic panths, then there will not be any problem.
2. But if it includes the Semitic religions also, then the trouble arises, as these religions don't recognise the existence of other religions, and if other religions exist, they want their total elimination from this planet.
3. And if the Manch is targeting Muslims, then, as Dr. Godbole says, it becomes naive and futile. Islam does not believe in *Sarva Panth Samādar* as per its holy book. The life-blood of

Islam is its intolerance and hatred towards other religions; if it comes under the Manch it has to dilute this cardinal rule and it is not for it. Hindus may fool themselves by saying that Islam is a religion of **peace**. Yes it is a religion of peace for its followers (with the exception of Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan etc), but for Kafirs it is a **religion of PIECES**.

All in all, Islam (so also Christianity) is a predator religion, which preys on non-Muslims to its heart's content. How it can be a member of the Manch is anybody's guess.

One can come to the conclusion that like Gandhiji (note his monkeys), the Hindu leaders remain stubbornly ignorant of Islam, and the pity is that they don't want to learn even at this late stage. They have only to open the Koran (and the Bible) and read, and they will understand the inherent strength of Islam (i.e. hate, intolerance) and its mindset.

33. B.K. Rao⁴⁵

After Kumbhakarna had practised severe austerities, Brahmā appeared before him and said, “I am pleased with your tapasyā, what boon would you have?”

“God, give me plenty of sleep: good, long sleep, for I enjoy it most!” replied Kumbhakarna.

“So be it,” blessed Brahmā and disappeared.

And thereafter, goes the story, Kumbhakarna used to sleep for six months at a stretch, wake up for a day to eat and drink, and go back to sleep for another six months.

If only Kumbhakarna had propitiated Saraswati, the Goddess of Wisdom, to start with, perhaps he would have asked for a better boon.

But was it Kumbhakarna’s fault that he was not wise enough to worship Saraswati first? For, Saraswati is a unique Goddess. While other Gods and Goddesses can be won over by praising them, how can we know how to pray to Saraswati or ask for a good boon if the Goddess herself does not take the initiative to bless us with the wisdom required?

Shall we then calm down our minds to *thoughtlessness* for Saraswati to illumine our minds, so that we Hindus get the guidance to tackle the problems confronting us at the end of the twentieth century?

Saraswati is *that power of the truth which we call inspiration*, writes Sri Aurobindo in *The Secret of the Vedas*. “Truth comes to us as a light, a voice, a compelling change of thought, imposing a new discernment of ourselves and all around us. Truth of thought creates truth of vision and truth of vision forms in us truth of being, and out of truth (*satyam*) flows naturally truth of emotions, will and action. This is indeed the central notion of the Vedas.”

Voice of India who are trying to provide an ideological defence of Hindu society and culture which are faced with a crisis, feel it is time now for stock taking. The tendency of Hindu leaders to take for granted the support of Hindus has sounded alarm signals, says a brochure, *Time for Stock Taking*, which carries two documents from a Swayamsevak, Dr. Shreerang Godbole. The stand taken by Dr. Godbole in the First Document contains eight points at issue. Among these are *misconceptions* of the Sangh Parivar that:

1. Islam is good but Muslims are bad;
2. Congress used Muslims. Congress treats Muslims as vote banks. We (BJP) will treat Muslims as human beings;
3. Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims; and

⁴⁵ The writer is a student of philosophy, and has made his living as a journalist. He has worked in the Organiser and the UNI. Hailing from Bangalore, he is now settled in New Delhi.

4. Sufis are tolerant Muslims.

These *misconceptions*, as Dr. Godbole has termed them, are indeed misconceptions according to scholars, both Indian and foreign, who have studied in depth both Hinduism and Islam as religions as well as social and political systems. The scholars say that Islam inculcates among its adherents a communal psyche which offers the outsider societies the only alternatives of conversion or annihilation.

The knowledge and will to define the neighbouring creed is lacking among Hindus even today, at the end of the twentieth century. That is why the Hindu leadership is bewildered and does not know how to identify friendly and inimical beliefs which affect the interests of Hindu society. As a result, we are faced with the alarming situation of the Hindu leadership groping in the dark and putting up slogans like **Sarva Panth Samādar**.

To deal with the Muslim problem, it is not enough for us to study our own scriptures and history for knowing our identifying characteristics; we should also study the Quran with the help of Islamic theology and history.

Sarva Panth Samādar is possible when the panths are parts of the same religious milieu, that is, Sanatana Dharma. But how can there be Sarva Panth Samādar if the term panth includes both religions of the mystic tradition and the *religions of the Book*? The religions of the Book include Judaism, Christianity and Islam while Marxism has been included among these by Bertrand Russell who calls it a Christian heresy.

ANOMALIES OF SECULARISM

An understanding of the Hindu view of Christianity and Islam also exposes the anomalies of Secularism of the Indian variety. Secularism was the means adopted by the people and rulers of Europe to achieve pluralism and freedom of thought by fighting the exclusivist ideology of Christianity and its institutions.

The United States became secular through the passage of the First Amendment to its Constitution which forbids the encroachment of religion on the affairs of the State. By this radical measure the United States ensured complete separation of religion and the State - which is what Secularism really means.

But in India, unfortunately, Secularism has become a historical and semantic anomaly. The word *secularism* has been distorted and misapplied to achieve the exact opposite of its real meaning and spirit. While Europe and America have used Secularism to protect their pluralistic societies against theocratic institutions, in India *Secularism* has been used as a means for suppressing pluralism inherent in the Hindu tradition and sheltering exclusivist ideologies.

The Pagan past of Europe and the rest of the non-Christian, non-Islamic world is akin to Hinduism. So we think this is the time for Hindus to assert the ideological kinship and form a

global chain to combat exclusivism and form pluralistic societies based on individualism, humanism, rationalism and science. This means liberating the people from the clutches of the Missionaries and Mullahs throughout the world.

And the beginning is to be made here in India by converting Hindus by accident of birth to Hindus by conviction: neither science nor reason could have any objection to that conversion.

A new thinking on religious questions is coming to the fore in most countries of the world. There is also a growing awareness that their present religions, Christianity and Islam, were imposed on them and that they themselves belonged to a different religious tradition. Ralph Borsodi, an American educationist and social thinker, observes in his *The Challenge of Asia* that *everywhere in the world, except in Asia Minor, the three great semitic religions - Christianity, Judaism and Islam are intruders*, that *indigenous Europe is pagan*, and that *in Europe, Christianity is a superimposition, in Asia, Islam is*.

THE INDIAN SCENE

A significant outcome of the last general election is that Hindus have decided to assert themselves through the voting pattern. The election result conveyed the unmistakable message that the so-called *minority* votes are not the arbiter, and that the Hindu votes also matter if they are rightly placed. All recent elections point in the same direction.

The Congress performance was poor not because it was losing the confidence of Muslims but because it was losing the confidence of the Hindus. After the Congress debacle in Gujarat in the last election, only Chhabildas Mehta, ex-Chief Minister, tried to alert his party to this reality but he was ridiculed by the *secular* ideologues. They were unwilling to sacrifice their pet theories despite the facts exploding them.

Other parties going out of their way to woo the Muslim votes have also suffered the same fate as that of the Congress. The Janata Dal is almost wiped out. It is now only a small party made up of still smaller groups.

Hindus have woken to the fact that their support is taken for granted and the Congress and other parties are pursuing anti-Hindu policies. Earlier the Hindus had assumed that the Congress was a Hindu party because most of its leaders were Hindus by birth. But in the Congress party, there were two kinds of Hindus - those who were ashamed to be known as Hindus and those who had regard for Hindu ideals. But Jawaharlal Nehru, a Hindu by accident of birth, systematically eliminated the influence of the pro-Hindu leaders in the Congress and adopted policies which negated Hinduism. And now the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its Parivar seem to think more like Nehru and less like Hindus by conviction.

Anti-Hindu elements in various parties like leftists and Muslims are working for weakening and ultimately the destruction of Hindu society: The so-called intelligentsia in the universities and the media are their tools.

The immediate task for the Hindus is to identify and isolate these Hindus by accident of birth who work for and with enemies of the Hindu society, calling themselves secularists. But this has to be done primarily through a Hindu cultural-spiritual renaissance.

THE HINDU-HINDU PROBLEM

So basically, it is not a Hindu-Muslim problem but a Hindu-by-accident versus Hindu-by-conviction problem.

Eradication of Nehruvian Secularism should be the main target. The secularists, who are mostly the *anti-Hindu* Hindus should be told that the count-down of their *hundred crimes of Shishupala* stands completed, and that there will be no more exemption from punishment for their offences. For they are the enemy within, playing the role of the *Trojan Horse*.

Hindus can rest assured that Hinduism is neither outdated nor is it against science and technology. Hinduism respects the humanistic approach to problems. All these basic insights of Hinduism promote modernism at its best - a rationally enlightened scientific outlook promoting a humane and open society.

Therefore, the forthcoming ideological battle can be aptly described in terms of Sir Kari Popper's famous book - *THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES*.

34. (Mrs) Veda Sampath⁴⁶

First Document:

1. Muhammad is Allah's messenger, and a mortal human being. Hence he is only an intermediary, which is also the claim made by his votaries. Some sentimental Hindus may have no objection to count him as a saint. But there is no question of his being included in the category of Hindu Gods.

Jesus is considered as the Son of God. But according to Christian belief, he presented himself as a martyr for the sake of humanity. No Hindu God is known to have suffered as a martyr. On the contrary, Hindu Gods are known to have protected their devotees and eliminated evil people with might and force. Hence there is no scope for Jesus being counted among Hindu Gods.

2. Islam entertains the notion that it is the only true religion, and that all other religions are anti-God. This notion is not true. Moreover, Islam says that God cannot be reached except through the mediation of Muhammad. On the other hand, according to Hinduism God is accessible to all human beings who follow the path of truthfulness and goodness. Moreover, Hinduism does not command its followers to struggle for spreading the faith in a particular god.
3. Not everything in Islam is bad, nor are all Muslims bad. It cannot also be maintained that all Muslims are necessarily good. Elements of intolerance that have got built into Islam, may be explained as due to certain historico-geographical circumstances - for instance, Jihad and conquest of non-Muslims. Similarly, some of its social injunctions may have arisen in past contingencies, and look like injustices in the present situation. But so long as Muslims refuse to renounce practices like Jihād and Talāq, and regard them as enjoined by their religion, they will continue to carry the tag of *bad people*.
4. Undoubtedly, Muslims are very well aware of their Indian ancestry. But now that they consider themselves as Muslims, there should be no objection to that on any ground. Secondly, we should take into account the extraordinary circumstances under which they got converted. They should be left to live as they are. How on earth can the Muslims get reconverted to Hinduism in view of the Hindu VarNa-Jāti system?
5. It is a proven fact that the British were the first to make political capital out of Hindu-Muslim differences. The Congress at that time felt compelled to make some concessions to Muslims in order to remove their fears due to their situation as a minority. Unfortunately, subsequent political leaders with the exception of Sardar Patel, converted their *minority situation* into a *Minority Status*. And sure enough, Muslim leaders, having tasted special

⁴⁶ The writer is an M.A. in Sociology and lives in Bangalore

privileges, have brought pressures on the Government to placate the Muslims and resisted all attempts at national integration. The Hindu Brahmin class has also to share the blame for creating a class of Untouchables, and thus preventing the formation of a merit-based society. So unless sincere efforts are made towards establishment of a National Identity, Muslims, like other weak or strong communities, will continue to look at themselves as a distinct group.

The assumption that Muslims as a whole consider the BJP as Kafirs is perhaps an exaggeration. It is true, however, that Muslims as well as other Hindu vested interests have done great harm to the BJP by presenting it as a political party whose sole aim is to attack Muslims and oust them from India in due course of time. Thanks to the Congress version of Secularism, this concept has been devalued both politically and ethically. The small cultural differences between Hindus and Muslims have been widened and made to look as irreconcilable political and religious differences. The ruling parties have been thriving on this artificially created barrier.

6. All mystics are the best humanitarians. Looking at the lives and literature of Sufi poets, they do not appear to be particularly anti-Hindu or pro-Islam. As regards Shah Waliullah and the Sufis of Bijapur, my guess is that they became fanatics due to loss of status as rulers. The religious fanaticism of the Bijapur Sultans and their persecution of Hindus is a documented fact. It is quite possible that some sufis-in-the-making might have lent their literary talents to the Sultans presumably under coercion.
7. Some Muslim theologians and politicians have forced a ghetto mentality on Indian Muslims by instilling fear of traditional Hindus in their already insecure minds. But as of now this artificial separation is getting erased. And dispassionate and patriotic efforts by Hindu and Muslim politicians and intellectuals should be able to bring the two communities together in positively meaningful ways.
8. Considering the Islamic doctrine of Jihād, there is no such thing as a disputed site. But Muslims could have looked at it (Ayodhya) in a secular context. The point about Ayodhya is not that it is not a place of worship for Muslims, but that it is a place of tremendous significance for Hindus.

Second Document:

I am one with Dr. Godbole in his apprehensions about the Sangh's over-zealousness as evident in the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch. Islam with its exclusivist claims and its sanction for the destruction of other people's places of worship, makes its adherents intolerant towards the rest of mankind. This is a grave matter in the present context when many multi-religious nations have come to exist or, in other words, when mono-religious states have ceased to exist.

The concept of Sarva Panth Samādar Manch is nothing but the concept of Secularism which

introduces an outside agent the supposedly non-communal mediator. What is the authority on the basis of which this agent of reconciliation or equator, puts forward his appeal? If the basis is Humanism, well, it has been tried out far too many times and has not worked. In case the Manch works at the cultural level, it is certainly more honest than Secularism which has been used solely for the political convenience and advantage of the ruling class. But if it is used as a religious platform, particularly in democratic and free India, it is no more than a farce.

In my opinion Islam and Christianity should not be equated with Marxism and called double-distilled Materialism. Such an equation is no better than equating religion with Fascism.

35. Smt. M. Sandhya⁴⁷

I am reacting only to one of the points raised in Dr. Godbole's Second Document, namely, the similarity between Christianity, Islam and Marxism as distinguished from true religions.

David Frawley in his book, *Hinduism; The Eternal Tradition*, says that “the attempt to connect human being with the Eternal is the very essence of true religion”. He further elucidates that true religions base themselves upon something Universal and function harmoniously with the World and Nature. They are assimilative, inclusive, spiritual and tolerant. The individual in true religions has absolute freedom to choose his own path, evolve his own methodologies and practices to realise the True Self (God). The true religions like Hinduism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Jainism, the Pagan religions, and the Indigenous religions of Africa and the Americas have evolved over long periods of time through the process of assimilation. They promote universality of vision and strive for spiritual experience. As they are organically connected to Nature and the Earth, they are peaceful and passive.

On the contrary, the institutionalised religions, viz. Islam and Christianity, are monolithic and belief-oriented systems. *Such religions identify religion with belief in one God, one primary representative of him, and one book of revelation from him. The right belief is said to bring about salvation. The wrong belief is thought to be the worst of all sins and bring about damnation. Such religions are trying to convert the entire world to their belief, which conversion they view as salvation for humanity.*

Marxism which lampoons religion as the opiate of the masses has very close doctrinal affinities with Christianity and Islam. It seems as if they had all come out, indeed they did, from the same mould. All the three, viz. Christianity, Islam and Marxism, believe in only one Book - the Bible, the Quran and the Das Kapital - received through the only representative - Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammad and Karl Marx. Division of humanity into believers and non-believers or bourgeoisie and proletariat is integral to their doctrines. Aggressiveness and militancy against heathens, infidels and bourgeoisie in the form of Crusades, Jihads and Class Wars is in-built into their theologies and ideologies which strive to establish their own world orders. Conversion, proselytization, destruction, subjugation and annihilation of non-believers and class enemies are the methodologies through which their expansionist and imperialistic designs are sought to be achieved. Dogma is their central tenet - that theirs is the only true faith, the only true belief, the only doctrine for salvation, and that all other doctrines are false and bogus. In the name of Holy Wars i.e., Christian Crusades and Muslim Jihads, millions and millions of people have been slaughtered over the centuries. The extent and quantum of destruction and loss of millions of lives in the so-called Communist Revolutions (whose halo has already been punctured) in the erstwhile Second World countries fuelled by Marxist doctrines, is still fresh in the memory of mankind. One wonders that if the personalities of Jesus, Mohammad and Marx had not existed, World History would have probably been without so much blood-flow.

Intolerance within and without is the name of the game. Koenraad Elst in his book, *Psychology of*

⁴⁷ The writer lives in Jagatsinghpur, headquarters of a district in Orissa.

Prophetism: A Secular Look at the Bible, says: “The problem with Christianity and Islam is superficially their intolerance and fanaticism. But this intolerance is a consequence of these religions’ untruthfulness; if your belief system is based on delusions, you have to pre-empt rational inquiry into it and shelter it from contact with more sustainable thought systems. The fundamental problem with the monotheist religions is not that they are intolerant but that they are untrue.” Replace the words *Christianity and Islam* in the above passage with *Marxism* and we find as if Elst is describing Marxism and its variants, viz. Leninism and Maoism. Compare this with the natural religions like Hinduism and non-communist and non-totalitarian ideologies. They welcome and encourage criticism and rational inquiry as a help in human advancement and scholarship. Yet another disturbing ideological congruence which Christianity, Islam and Marxism share is their totalitarianism in seeking to govern and establish through the institutions of the Church, the Umma and the Party, a uniformity and a conformity in every sphere of life and society.

Ask them: “Why should God have only one Son when all things come from Him? Why should there be a final prophet when there were previous prophets and while the capacity for spiritual knowledge can be found in all people? Why should Dialectical Materialism alone define all aspects and dynamics of the Universes, history, and society? Why should dictatorship of the proletariat alone be the methodology of correcting the inequities?” They cannot answer these simple but vital questions because the totality of life and society are too complex to fit into any strait-jacket or over simplistic and artificial definitions and doctrines. The similitudes in the Christian, Islamic and Marxist ideologies are not only in their fundamental and essential precepts as seen above, but as a matter of fact in their modus operandi too. Unlike the natural religions, Christianity and Islam being bereft of spiritual teaching, are essentially socio-political ideologies, much the same as Marxism, with the ultimate aim of attaining absolute power over the whole of humanity. They therefore promote trans-national and extra-national allegiances by mentally uprooting people from their nationalistic and native cultural moorings. In their quest for power these totalitarian ideologies are ruthless and treat human beings as mere instruments. They do not show any respect for human individuality and therefore seek to establish uniformity, thus militating against the Nature’s principle of diversity. They heap scorn on, indulge in false propaganda against, and denigrate and debunk the religions, faiths, beliefs, practices, ideologies, concepts and doctrines of others by distorting the truth, by painting the others as the infidels, the kafirs, the capitalists, the bourgeoisie and as the worst sinners and exploiters to be condemned forever to the Hell or to be annihilated and eliminated. In their false propaganda they seem to adopt the principle of Goebbles (or is it vice versa?). They are adept at distortion of history to suit their exclusivistic claims and to paint others in black. For instance, the early Christian missionaries by consciously distorting history made the Jews guilty of *Deicide* (God-murder of Jesus) which was largely responsible for centuries of Christian anti-semitism culminating in genocide of Jews in Nazi Germany.

Genetically also there are striking similarities in all the three. Christianity began by debunking Judaism and Jewish beliefs as false. Mohammad started his Islam by lampooning Christianity for corrupting the message and revelation of God. To pre-empt any rational inquiry and criticism of his Faith, the Prophet put a permanent seal on himself by proclaiming that he was the last prophet and anyone who claims prophethood after him should be treated as an impostor and done to death. On similar lines, Karl Marx started with the disparaging statement that *religion is the opiate of the masses* and

went on to propound his own delusive concepts of dialectical materialism, thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis, dictatorship of the proletariat and so on. The only discernible difference in the proclamations of these essentially socio-political ideologies of Christianity, Islam and Marxism is that in the ancient days of people's gullibility the former two could be masked and sold as religions, whereas by the time Marxism came into existence the society (Western) was getting fairly modernised and therefore it had to remain contented with *ideology* status only unlike its more fortunate elder brothers - Christianity and Islam. Had Marx been born in ancient times, Marxism probably would have become another opiate of the masses. Not that it has not become an ideological opiate of some. But that difference is only in semantics.

36. K. Satya Deva Prasad

I am in receipt of your pamphlet *Time for Stock Taking: A Swayamsevak Speaks* wherein you solicited response to the issues raised therein from Hindus in general and Swayamsevaks in particular.

As I can see, you sent the pamphlet to me for only one reason, that is, myself being one of the participants of the Prajna Bharati Seminar of July '96 at Pune. I see no other reason why you should know my whereabouts.⁴⁸ As such I am responding as a Swayamsevak. My association with Sangh is of two decades. I have great respect and admiration for Sangh. In my view it is the only organisation that is working to implant love for our motherland and Hindu tradition deep in common people's minds on a large scale. If today I am seriously interested in issues concerning Hinduism and Hindu society, it is totally due to the inspiration I derived from the Sangh. Therefore I insist that wherever I differ from what we call Sangh's view or formulations, I do so as an ardent follower of Sangh but with an independent viewpoint of my own on certain issues.

As a native of Hyderabad city, I have had the gruesome opportunity to witness Islam since my childhood. I come from a middle-class family and I have experienced both the envious aggressiveness of my less fortunate Hindu brethren and the condescending attitude of the callous Hindu rich. But there is something special about the attitude of the Muslims towards a Hindu. A Muslim's hatred for a Hindu transcends the normal human boundaries. It cannot be understood or explained in terms of normal human behaviour. It is a deep pathological symptom. I tried very hard in my younger years to understand this symptom. I was baffled until I joined the Sangha. There I learnt some lessons in Muslim history and Muslim mentality. But only after reading the publications of Voice of India, I acquired the necessary knowledge to analyse Muslim behavior through an understanding of Islam.

After a serious study for over 15 years and combining my own experience with the results of my study, I came to the inevitable conclusion to which Dr. Shreerang Godbole also arrived - Islam is the culprit. Islam is a pathological mindset. Islam is the evil force that moulds Muslims into what they are.

Mouthing slogans like Sarva Dharma Samabhāva thereby equating Hinduism with Islam and Christianity, is a matter of blind conviction for some people and a matter of strategy for some others. I personally feel that on both counts, Islam stands to gain at the expense of non-Muslims. I place Gandhiji (with due respects to him) in the first category and Sangh leaders in the second. I have a strong feeling that Sangh leaders know (at least instinctively) about the true evil nature of Islam but they do not want to foreclose all avenues of dialogue and reconciliation with Muslims by telling the truth openly. They perhaps feel that possessed by the evil spirit called Islam, Muslims need some pep talk until the latter are cured of the evil; perhaps they also feel that Muslims also were once upon a time Hindus only and have need for persuasion rather than enmity.

⁴⁸ The brochure was sent to him as his name was on our mailing list because of his being a buyer of our publications, as he himself admits. We had no knowledge that he was a participant in the Pune Seminar.

I personally feel that any sort of soft-peddling on the issue of Islam will not bring Muslims into the national mainstream. History offers innumerable examples that there is no such thing as peaceful coexistence with Islam. What we see as co-existence, like the present situation in India, is only a respite between two Islamic invasions for total hegemony.

On this count I totally agree with your two brief comments. Hindu leaders of all shades continue to take Hindus for granted vis-à-vis Muslims. Congress played a big role in perpetuating Muslim influence in India for worse. No doubt a Swayamsevak sometimes feels that the Sangha Parivar at times betrays the same weakness of soft-peddling on Islam in the name of national unity.

During a conversation with a Sangh stalwart at the said Pune Seminar, I pointed out to him that the long presence of Islam in India only made life miserable for Hindus. In reply, he repeated the worn out cliche that there are good Muslims too! I was rather disappointed. If this (naive) comment is any indication, it reveals the poor understanding of Islam as a global-hegemony ideology even among the higher echelons of the Sangh family. It is a serious lacuna indeed!

As for the comments offered by Dr. Godbole at the Pune Seminar (vide first document of your pamphlet), I totally agree with him. I only wish to add one point to his comment No.8. **Namaz offered on a disputed site (like Ayodhya) is not acceptable to Allah.** Here there is no dispute as far as Muslims are concerned, because the Quran clearly says that all land belongs to Muslims (through Allah). As such there is no such thing as a disputed land. Therefore they can offer namaz anywhere and everywhere. That is the credo of Islam. That is why Muslims destroy other people's places of worship and build their mosques on the same spots with a clean conscience.

Lastly, we Hindus are sending wrong signals to the Muslims by mouthing slogans like Sarva Dharma Samabhāva and Sarva Pantha Samādara. It only fortifies Muslims in their misanthropic ideology called Islam. Instead, we should tell them the truth about Islam, that is, how the world at large sees Islam. I only hope the Sangh leaders bestow the attention this crucial issue needs.

37. Jagannath Sharma⁴⁹

Islam -The Unknown

For years, Mahatma Gandhi made his congregation recite with devotional spirit: **Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram; Ishwar Allah tere naam, Sabko sanmati de Bhagwaan.**

Hindus of all hues were carried away by these chantings, and even after about half a century of his demise, or so to say, bloody partition of the country, this hymn is heard on AIR, DD and through loudspeakers on 2nd October and 31st January from year to year. None has ever bothered to know if Allah actually means what Hindus perceive as Ishwar. Hindus simply consider Allah a literal translation of Ishwar, which to them carries the same philosophical qualities as they see in Ishwar. Just as an elephant and haathi are the same in different languages. It may sound strange, but it is true that what Allah ordains upon his followers is not what Ishwar expects from his believers, and even non-believers.

Allah without Mohammad is non-existent. He has spoken only through Mohammad and given his message to make the world free of all infidels (kafirs, non-believers). The very word *Allah* connotes the one who has given *illām* i.e. call from the sky/heaven, to Mohammad. The Islamic Kalima, **Lā Ilāhā illā 'llāhū: Muhammādun Rasūlu'llāh**, means, *There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet.*

Few non-Muslims may be aware of the meaning of the first part. That part is conveniently taken as Allah meaning Ishwar. But the second part is its real essence which separates Allah from Ishwar, and makes Allah exclusive with an entirely different character of a demonic nature.

Let us see a few of the teachings or gospels of Allah which he gave through Mohammad for the salvation of the world:

1. Allah has created this world only for believers, i.e. Muslims. Non-believers need either to be made believers or eliminated.
2. Allah pardons all who come to seek his pardon in a masjid. He doesn't refuse pardon even if a sinner goes on repeating sins but calls at his place, i.e. the masjid, to seek pardon after every committal of sin.
3. On the other hand, if a person does not commit any sin and bothers little to seek his pardon, or to come to his place, Allah has no love for him.
4. Cheating, speaking untruth, playing fraud are sins only if committed with a believer, i.e. Muslim. Not so if committed with others.
5. A believer, i.e. Muslim, should not give salute, or way to a non-believer. His right is to get salute from non-believers, and get them out of his way.

⁴⁹ A resident of Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, the writer has formed his view of Islam from his contact with a Muslim classmate in F.C. College, Lahore, and a study of the governments functioning in several Islamic countries.

6. To make idols, images, or picture of any of Allah's creations is tantamount to imitating Allah, and therefore an inexcusable sin punishable with death. So on, and so forth.

Do these qualities make Ishwar and Allah the same?

A Muslim who has no faith in Mohammad and separates Allah from Mohammad, is an infidel.

Leaving aside the present-day *fatwas* of dominant Islamic mullahs declaring Shias, Khojas, Bohras, Ahmadiyas as non-Muslim, Islam is an exclusive faith having to do nothing with spirituality, salvation of all human souls, creation of universal brotherhood, or to live peacefully with diversity. There is no place for tolerance or adjustment. There is no scope for reform or change either. No scope for any discussion on teachings of the Quran, or of any commentary on Mohammad, except their praise.

Due to ignorance of this world-wide faith of millions, gullible Hindu leadership of the so-called secular species, has been fooling itself and its followers, and day-dreaming by endeavoring to teach ***Ishwar Allah tere naam***. Does Islam permit it? It has been a purely one-sided affair. This ignorance on the part of Hindu leadership resulted in the partition of the country. Pakistan was created as a *holy land*. Remaining India can't claim to be holy because non-believers live here.

A Muslim can never be true to his faith, Islam, if he opts not to hate a Hindu, a non-believer. Also, the system of elected government where non-believers can possibly dominate and rule over Muslims, is un-Islamic in terms of its true teachings. There is one book, one prophet, nothing more, nothing less. The easy or non-violent prescription of the Book for a non-believer who wants to survive, is to get converted to Islam. That is the law of Islam.

Islam is, therefore, for an expansionist, forcibly conformist society, like Communism. The day Muslims start questioning the prescriptions of the Quran or the Hadis, or accepting teachings of holy men other than Mohammad, Islam will vanish like Communism. It is a raw political faith under the garb of religion, and nothing more. Strangely, there are prescriptions for believers to shave their heads and grow beards, to kill dogs, not to wear yellow garments, and marry up to four wives if they can do justice to them. Thus to call Islam a religion, is a travesty of truth.

On the other hand, all sects of Hinduism believe in ***vasudhaiva kutumbakam*** or ***sarbatt dā bhalā, sarve bhavantu sukhino***, i.e. the whole world is a family, do good to all, may all be comfortable. It does not make any exception of any kind. This is all-embracing, even including animal and plant life. And *kutumb* covers environment. This is the pivot of the Hindu faith. Question of any hatred or intolerance or violence does not arise.

It is the wonder of wonders how Islam has been on the rise over the past fourteen centuries when the world has undergone so much transformation and human mind has been striving to make the world a place worth living for all human beings, nay all the creatures. Teachings of Islam cannot stay for a day if the Quran is let open for a critical discussion. This is forbidden. And that is the secret of Islam's survival. But how long can such a closed mind be kept closed?

Christianity is more or less alike, with the difference that whereas Mohammad claimed to be the messenger of Allah, Jesus Christ claims to be the only son of God. So far as hate and violence is concerned, America owes its European inhabitation to the violent Christianity dominating Europe in those times.

To put these fountains of hatred on the same pedestal as any sect of Hindu faith, is to obliterate the line separating love and hatred, tolerance and violence, humanism and barbarism.

As Islam has been given a widespread recognition as a religion, which it is not, we cannot shut our eyes to this reality. But this so-called religion is playing politics in India and elsewhere. Even in Muslim countries, different hues of Muslims are overturning Muslim regimes in the name of *true Islam*. So, we have to take Islam as a political force, with pan-Islamism as its objective, spelling dire international ramifications.

Any compromise to placate Islam for social or political goals is bound to give this force a more striking vigour.

The solution lies to take it by the horns. Let the masses know what are the teachings of the Scriptures of Islam. Thoughtful Muslims and Christians will sooner or later discard their *faiths* which being in reality pure political doctrines, are subject to conviction, and therefore conversion. So far they dutifully entice inward conversion. By conviction, they will themselves come forward for outward conversion. As Hinduism doesn't believe in conversion, or reconversion, it will be *Paravartan*. It is the Hindus who must be prepared to accept them.

If any section of Hindu leadership thinks of making peace with Muslims by giving respectful recognition to their barbarian beliefs propounded by the Quran and the Hadis, they will be committing the same folly as was done by Mahatma Gandhi and perpetuated by the mushroom growth of numerous political parties of post-independence India, busy in dividing the society into vote banks with different labels.

Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India are experiencing the rise of Muslim fundamentalism, and there is armed stir in its execution, This has to be checked in the interest of society as a whole. Making peace on their terms is to behave like an ostrich.

38. Ajit Singh⁵⁰

This is with reference to the pamphlet *Time For Stock Taking: A Swayamsevak Speaks* published by **Voice of India**. Myself and many others who read it are appalled to learn that R.S.S. leaders have floated a *Sarva Panth Samādar Manch* which includes, in the definition of panth, religions other than the Sanatan Dharma sects, such as Islam and Christianity, whose fundamentalist and regimented beliefs are diametrically opposed to the spiritual democracy of Hindu Dharma. It is all the more shocking for a person like me who has been a devoted Swayamsevak since 1943 and has boldly faced the adverse situations even at the risk of my job etc. during the Emergency. Departure from the basic principles of the Sangh has come as a bolt from the blue.

I joined the R.S.S. in 1943 after thoroughly studying the book *We or Our Nationhood Defined* by Swargiya Guruji Shri M.S. Golwalkar, wherein he has defined Dharma to be an essential constituent of a nation. It has been ingrained in our psychology through the R.S.S. teaching that *Hindustan (undivided) belongs to Hindus even if a single Hindu is there*.

The distinction between *liberal Muslims* and *fundamentalist Muslims* is imaginary. One has to believe in the Quran and the Hadis without any question or reasoning, otherwise one is a kafir to be condemned to death and consigned to hellfire in perpetuity. As per tenets of Islam, there can be no friendship and coexistence with kafirs (except for strategic reasons). This is what the teachings of the Quran and the Hadis and the life of the prophet Mohammed contain. The prayer call (*azan*) given from all mosques on loud speakers five times a day is, in fact, a repeated announcement of war to be unleashed on other religions. In his prayer (*namaz*) five times a day, every Muslim vows not to have relations with the non-Muslims and prays for perpetration of atrocities on them.

The Hindu Samaj has been looking forward to the R.S.S. for inspiration and guidance to steer the Samaj out of its difficulties and to prepare it for facing and defeating the adverse and hostile forces. For secularism and the spirit of co-existence to be meaningful, genuine and a matter of principle rather than a matter of expedient policy and tactics, it is essential to have interaction and free debate with these religions. To achieve this purpose, it is imperative to have a thorough knowledge of the teaching of the Quran and the Hadis, the life of prophet Mohammed, Islamic history since the inception of Islam throughout the globe, and the behavioural psychology of Muslims vis-à-vis non Muslims. Some of the contrasting features of Sanatan Dharma on the one hand and Islam on the other hand are as under:

1. *Sanatan Dharma*. Believes in the worship of the idols of gods and goddesses.
Islam. Mandatory and pious duty of Muslims to break the idols and destroy temples. (Even if Muslims call themselves Mohammadi Hindus, their attitude towards Sanatan Dharma is not going to change.)

⁵⁰ The writer is a retired Superintending Engineer from the Irrigation Department, Rajasthan, and a Swayamsevak of the RSS since 1943. He lives in NOIDA near Delhi.

2. *Sanatan*. India is worshipped as a mother.
Islam. Non-Muslim state is a Dar-ul Harb.
3. *Sanatan*. India is a sacred land.
Islam. India is Bhog Bhoomi till converted to Dar-ul-Islam and all traces of kufr and jahaliya prior to the advent of Islam are removed.
4. *Sanatan*. Everybody accepts that another man's wife is like a mother.
Islam. "*We have made lawful unto thee whom thy right hand possessest of those whom Allah hath given thee as spoil of war*" (Quran, 33:50).
(Sarva Panth Samādar will mean equal respect for a son-in-law and a rapist.)
5. *Sanatan*. Essence of Dharma is truth, rationalism and reasoning. Hindus are tolerant because of it.
Islam. Essence of Dīn is belief. Reasoning or questioning the revelations is kufr.
6. *Sanatan*. Believes in *live and let live* and in harmony with nature. The Earth is the mother.
Islam Believes in *live, but do not let live*. All nature and animal world is for the consumption of momins.
7. *Sanatan*. Believes in *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*.
Islam. Muslims alone are the inheritors of the whole world. Do not trust and make friends with non-Muslims.
8. *Sanatan*. Bharat is a nation since times immemorial.
Islam. Does not believe in confining Muslims to any national boundary.
9. *Sanatan*. Considers foreign invaders as enemies.
Islam. Muslim invaders are welcome. They are heroes and liberators.
10. *Sanatan*. It is inhuman and barbarous to convert people of other faiths by the sword.
Islam. It is the God-ordained duty of Muslims to convert others by the sword. They are grateful to those who put their ancestors to the sword or converted them to Islam *making them men from the worst of animals*.
11. *Sanatan*. All languages with a national base are national languages.
Islam. Only a language with an Arabic or Persian base and written in Arabic or Persian script is acceptable.
12. *Sanatan*. The prayer is *sarve bhavantu sukhinah*.
Islam. Namaz is for Moking atrocities on non-Muslims and vows not to co-exist with them.

The real service to the Hindu Samaj is to prepare it to defeat Islam which is bent upon annihilating Sanatan Dharma. First step will be to identify the danger, the enemy, his ideology, inspiration, strategy, history, and his behaviour pattern. For this a vast literature is required. Hindu writers and intellectuals should be honoured, supported and protected. It is heartening that **Voice of India** is championing this cause. If this literature reaches every Hindu, it will automatically infuse a spirit of sacrifice and unity in the Samaj. The knowledge of a common danger is a great uniting force. Hindu Samaj should blunt the aggressiveness of the bully through ideological war so that he can be made to recoil, and becomes defensive and apologetic. In my considered opinion, Hindu organisations should take up this cause.

39. Ram Autar Singh⁵¹

Reference pamphlet *Time for Stock Taking*, my views on the two documents from Dr. Shreerang Godbole are enumerated as under

FIRST DOCUMENT

1. *What is the harm in adding Jesus and Mohammad to the 33 crore Hindu gods and goddesses?*

There is difference between love and infatuation. Infatuation can be one-sided but love is reciprocal. Devotion is blind. Quite a few Hindus appear infatuated with Muslims. First the Sikhs sang “*Pahle Allah Noor Upjaya*”, and adorned themselves with blue uniform like that of Mullahs and Sufis, yet Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Govind Singh and Banda Bairagi were made martyrs by Muslim tyrants. Pakistan helped Khalistanis against Hindus. Gandhiji too sang, “*Ishwar Allah tere nam*” and of unity of Ram and Rahim, but with no effect, response or echo from Muslims. The treachery continued. In Hindi films, Hindus are shown singing the word *Khuda* or *Allah* but never with reciprocity from the Muslim characters, who never utter Rama or Krishna. In fact, the real question is whether Islam allows addition of any God other than Allah, not whether Hindus are willing to include Mohammad or Allah among their Gods. The fact is that Hindus have been doing it since the Muslim invaders entered India, but the Muslims have yet to show any flexibility or cracks in their dogmas.

2. *All religions (including Islam) lead to God.*

This concept is alien to Semitic religions. I have read Koran and Bible. As per Koran, only the members of the *UMMAT* (i.e., those who believe in Allah and his last prophet Mohammad) can attain Heaven and the rest will be cast into Hell. Similarly, as per Bible, only Christians can attain salvation. Since Hinduism is not a religion, but Dharma and a way of life, it is they and only they who believe that all religions are different ways towards the One God. Muslims still use the word *Jihad* - a fight against Kafirs (non-Muslims), while Christians before acquiring half of the world used the word *Crusade*. Even now, Western militancy has four wings - the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Church.

We can't forget that Sultan Sikandar Lodi put Bodhan to death for no other offence than saying that *Hinduism is a true religion like Islam*.

3. *Islam is good but Muslims are bad*

Since Koran is the word of Allah and Mohammad is his last prophet, their words are a must meant to be followed in letter and spirit. Because of his scriptures a Muslim cannot afford to be tolerant to Kafirs or non-Muslims as they order him not to reside near non-Muslims, not to salute or greet them, not to mix with them, but to hate them, kill them, loot them, and always to maintain a separate identity.

⁵¹ The writer is a retired R.M.O. living at Haldwani in District Nainital, U.P.

Any tolerance shown by Muslims is *Maslibat* in their words, i.e., a timely compromise and tact. Or a Muslim showing compassion or mercy to Kafirs, does so under dictates of his conscience, momentarily forgetting the rigid dogmas and *firmans* of Allah and the Prophet towards Kafirs.

4. *If Muslims are told of their common ancestry they will unite with Hindus.*

This is ridiculous and a mere flight of imagination. 99% of Muslims in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are descendants of converted Hindus and they know it - Jinnah, Liaqat Ali, poet Iqbal and Bhutto, for example. All of them knew their Hindu origin, but became fanatic bigots and more brutal than Arab invaders.

They can unite with Hindus under one and only one condition, and that is if Hindus start to behave and deal with Muslims as the latter behave with Hindus i.e. if Hindus are united, strong and aggressive.

5. *Congress used Muslims. Congress treats Muslims as vote-bank. We (BJP) will treat Muslims as human beings.*

In fact, Muslims used the Congress and deserted it when new powerful champions were found to achieve political gains. Now they have better quislings from amongst the Hindus than during the Khilafat Movement, and achievement of Pakistan and Bangladesh. They wooed our Sikh brothers to fight Hindus in Punjab, wooed Kashmiri Muslims for Jihad against Kashmiri Hindus, and are now wooing anti-India groups in Northeastern States.

In the eyes of every Muslim, Hindus are Kafirs and not worthy of tolerance. They understand only one language which is the language of Jews in Israel, i.e., tit for tat.

6. *Sufis are tolerant Muslims.*

Again a preposterous idea. Sufi saints (?) established Dargahs and Mazars, and never allowed any other kind of worship. In fact, Sufis were the advance party or the sappers and miners of invading Muslim armies. Hundreds of persons, in the garb of Sufi saints, swarmed into India and established their hermitages(?) i.e. Dargahs in deserted or usurped Hindu buildings and temples, as in Delhi, Ajmer, Fatehpur Sikri and several other places throughout India. They posed as a balm to the insulted, humiliated and plundered Hindus. Look at Medieval History and you find numerous Sufis springing up like mushrooms (*kukurmuttas*) everywhere, but are now extinct after the elimination of Muslim rule, as if their breed was a thing of the past like Dinosaurs. Now-a-days in India at least, one cannot find any new *Sufi-saint*, but only their Dargahs and Mazars, where *Qawwali* is held and Muslims (of course some misguided Hindus too) throng to worship the graves for mundane benefits.

I personally know such a Dargah, that of Pahalwan Sahib at Bareilly. He was actually the murderer of a Hindu. But Muslims (and alas! Hindus too) daily go there to bow and worship.

7. *Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims.*

I agree with Dr. Godbole that Islamic theology i.e. Koran and Hadis, besides Mullahs and

Maulvis and Muslim leaders tell Muslims how they are superior to Kafirs, and how tactfully they should behave in a country where they are in minority and not in power.

The example of Syed Shahabuddin, ex M.P., a candidate for Jinnahship, is before us. In the case of Shah Bano, he agitated till Rajiv Gandhi passed an enactment, nullifying the Supreme Court judgement giving benefits to Muslim women. He took out Ram Janma Bhoomi/Babri Masjid dispute out of cold storage and then inflamed it. He boycotted participation of Muslims in Independence Day celebrations, preached apartheid by opposing the singing of Vande Mataram by Muslims; and went to Minakshipuram in support of Mullahs who had indulged in wholesale conversion of Hindus to Islam.

Indian society is secular in character and culture and Muslims and Christians are increasing and prospering here, whereas in Muslim countries the two sects, Shias and Sunnis, cannot offer Namaz together in a mosque, nor Protestants can go to a Catholic Church in a Christian country.

Separatism is the keyword propagated by Mullahs and Maulvis and the ghetto mentality is their own creation, as they detest and abhor assimilation in the main national stream. They are always scared of losing their identity.

8. *Namaz offered on a disputed site (like Ayodhya) is not acceptable to Allah.*

This theory was advanced by Sri Harihar Shankar Jain, Advocate, and the Secretary of the Vishva Hindus Adhivakta Sangh, in a Writ Petition in the Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid Case. In fact, this wrongful plea is based on an imaginary presumption and not on any Muslim Scripture.

Islam forbids idol-worship, and so, when Mohammad conquered Mecca, he destroyed 360 idols affixed in the Kaaba, before offering Namaz. In the so-called Babri Masjid structure, there were human figures engraved on pillars on which the three domes rested. As per the Waqf Board Case, Muslim conquerors read Khutbas there upto 1934 A.D. Namaz was often offered on Fridays by Muslim gatherings, after which Muslims left it unattended. Similarly, the other two mosques built by Aurangzeb on Swargadwar and Treta Ke Thakur were left unattended and turned into ruins.

Mullahs of the stature of Imam Bukhari of Delhi and other Muslim leaders had declared through press statements that once Namaz is offered at a place, it becomes a masjid for ever. So the Muslims in general demand reconstruction of Babri Masjid at the same place in Ayodhya so that the symbol of national shame must hurt the Hindus always.

Bishambhar Nath Pandey has tried to justify the greatness of Islam, its culture and compassion through his book, *Paigambar Mohammad, Koran/Hadis-Islam Darshan*, concealing the true contents of Koran and Hadis instead of exposing them. We should remember that a case was filed in a Calcutta court citing those Ayats of Koran that preach hatred, bloodshed

and loot of Kafirs, but which was not heard under pressure (from Rajiv Gandhi) and dismissed.

SECOND DOCUMENT

Sarva Panth Samādar Manch was floated by the B.M.S. t.o give a platform for extending equal honour to all ways of worship, the original idea being of Sri Dattopant Thengdi, founder of the B.M.S.

Formation of such a Manch is absurd, for Hindus do not need such preachings; only the Muslims and Christians need them. Hindus already believe in *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, while Semitic religions believe in their exclusive superiority. In fact, Muslims think of Hindus as a pack of fools who organise such Manchs for unity, Bhai-Bhaiship, reservation in services, secular songs, seminars, stage plays (like that of Sahmat) or support drawing of nude portraits of Hindu Gods and Goddesses (as was done by Hussain), or demand ban on books showing any critical evaluation of Muslim theology.

To speak for Hindus by the Hindus in Hindu India is neither wrong nor illegal. Emperor Prithviraj Chauhan fought Ghori, Rana Sanga fought Babar; Maharana Pratap fought Akbar despite Man Singh; Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj fought Aurangzeb despite Jaswant Singh; Banda Bairagi fought and became a martyr despite neutrality of several Hindu kings who remained silent spectators. The fight continues and now when we are independent why can't we wipe out symbols of national shame imposed by foreign invaders. It is unthinkable that a few pseudo-secularists or fifth-columnists can stop the great Hindu tide. Let us, instead, form *Remove National Shame Manch* in each and every district of India, and unitedly do the rest.

40. Vikram Singh⁵²

Dr. Shreerang Godbole, a Swayamsevak of the RSS for 17 years, put forth his views frankly and plainly on *Hindu Organisations and the Muslim Problem* at a Seminar in the presence of the think-tanks of the Sangh Parivar. Immediately after that, he wrote a letter to Shri K.S. Sudarshan, Sah-Karyawaha R.S.S., bemoaning the formation of the *Sarva Panth Samādar Manch* by the Sangh.

Thanks to Voice of India both the documents are now available to the interested persons. As far as the aforesaid letter is concerned, the analysis presented by Dr. Godbole is clear and complete and needs no addition. The analysis regarding the *Eight Formulations* of the Sangh Parivar is no doubt elaborate. Even then it needs some additions.

1. Firstly, the logic of adding Jesus and Muhammad to the 33 crore Hindu Gods and Goddesses may be attractive and fascinating at first sight but, in practice, it is not so. It will prove *one-sided love*, or at least Muslims will never like to put Muhammad, who is for them the last prophet (not God), with innumerable Hindu Gods and Goddesses which are nothing but kufr according to their faith - Islam - which proclaims Monotheism and hates Polytheism to the extent of using the sword. Secondly, this is nothing but an imposition of iconoclastic *mazhab-i-Islam* on idolaters. Thirdly, social assimilation is never achieved by such means. The flop-show of Akbar's *Din-i-Ilahi* is an historic evidence. And lastly, this logic of the Sangh Parivar is not at all novel. In fact, the originator of this logic was the veteran national leader, Lala Haradaya. But ultimately, in the year 1925, Lalaji opined in his article, *Merā Pavitra Pāgalpan*, that Muslims will never accept willingly my proposal of calling themselves *Muhammadī Hindus*! So, if Islam is not ready to accept Bharatiya Nationalism, then this type of foreign religion should not be allowed to stay in Bharat.
2. Philosophers may say that all religions lead to God. In fact, philosophers are above religions. But when we think of the common man, such high flying is not appropriate; they are rather harmful. e.g. if all religions including Islam lead to God, then some Muslim zealot can come forward and say that if all Hindus embrace Islam, then, within no time, Hindu-Muslim unity will be achieved. He may even generously offer that the *New Muslims* will be called *Rampanthi Muslims*. Then why bother to describe Indian Muslims as *Muhammad-panthi Hindus*?
3. To say that *Islam is good but Muslims are bad* is astonishing. Because the original Hindus who embraced Islam sometime back became *Muslims*. And so, when it is said that *Islam is good but Muslims are bad*, then it implies that Hindu religion, culture, and blood is bad - so bad that even the philosopher's stone of Islam could not make them good!
4. In some respect, it can be accepted that Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims. But to remove the present Muslim leadership is not a joke; it will need a total revolution, and to create a revolution in an alien society, particularly Muslims, if not impossible, is a hard task. Even Mahatma Gandhi could not get the slightest success in his mission, and we had to lose a part of our country in the form of Pakistan. Is it not strange

⁵² The writer is a Professor of Economics, retired from Government Education Service of Madhya Pradesh. At present he owns and edits *Hindū Asmitā* weekly published from Indore in the same Pradesh. He has been a Swayamsevak of the RSS for 57 years.

that the present-day RSS leaders have forgotten the oft-quoted aim and object of the first two Sarsanghchalaks, Dr. Hedgewar and Shri Guruji Golwalkar, that first we have to organise, unite and strengthen the Hindu Society?

5. Some clever political Muslims have no doubt said that Namaz offered on a disputed site (like Ayodhya) is not acceptable to Allah. On this, Dr. Godbole has rightly observed that nowhere is any such thing said in the Koran and the Hadis, and that this is plain nonsense. If we accept such *plain nonsense*, then somebody will say that the RSS Kendriya Karyalaya at Nagpur is also a Mosque because the then BJP leader Shri Arif Beg and some other Muslim members offered Namaz in that very Karyalaya as that Namaz was accepted by Allah.

Miracle of Balancing Votes

It is pitiable for the Hindus as such that the one-time unflinching protagonists of Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra are now bent upon ideological adultery of this sort. This drastic change in their attitude is because of the Power Politics. The Sangh Parivar has decided to go ahead on the Rajpath of Power Politics. They think that political power will solve all the problems; it will even given shape to the Cultural Nationalism of their dream. In this age of democracy, power can be achieved by the majority of votes. But the days of statistical calculation have gone and the reality of *balancing votes* is on the screen. This *balancing votes* factor can produce miracles in any constituency to the Legislative Assembly as a whole. This fear of Muslims in the form of *balancing votes* has created the terror in Hindu intelligentsia - Muslims are in crores and we will have to accommodate them, which means accommodating them at any cost, and on their terms.

At the time of partition we could not follow the path which Spain had followed centuries ago. No one should hope that in the twenty-first century Hindus can follow that path. Before partition, Muslims were in crores in number. Even after partition, they are in crores today. Be sure that if a new Pakistan is carved out and Muslims are not driven out of that retruncated Bharat - it is dead sure they will not be driven out - then with the silver jubilee celebration of that new Pakistan, the number of Muslims will again sore up to crores. That means the Muslim Problem before the nation, in other words, before the Hindus, will remain till Muslims do not change their basic ideology. And as their basic ideology is totally based on the Koran, the Hadis and the Sunnah, no one can expect a change in the attitude of Indian Muslims for decades to come. It is up to Hindus, particularly votaries of Hindutva, to decide ultimately how to solve this critical Muslim Problem.

In fact, this Muslim Problem is not a new but a chronic one. There are remedies to root it out. But as **Voice of India** has rightly said, since 1885 the Indian National Congress and now the Sangh Parivar tends to take Hindus for granted. In the forties, Congress partitioned the country and today the Sangh Parivar is going to submit to the Muslims for the sake of political power. Their greed for political power is so great that they cannot see the other side of Democracy, namely, that in politics power is never perpetual, it generally changes hands. In order to attain power, they have already gone to the unimaginable extent.

Well-Planned Conspiracy

The Tribunal constituted under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 to hear the case of the ban on the RSS, had served a notice to the RSS. In a detailed reply to the allegations made against it in the said notice, the RSS through its General secretary had explained its view of Hindu and Hindu Rashtra as follows (*Organiser*, June 6, 13 and 20, 1993):

1. “It is submitted that the term Hindu in the conviction as well as in the constitution of the RSS is a cultural and civilisational concept and not a political or religious dogma. The term as a cultural concept will include and did always include all including Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Muslims, Christians and Parsis. The cultural nationality of India, in the conviction of the RSS, is Hindu and it was inclusive of all who are born and who have adopted Bharat as their Motherland, including Muslims, Christians and Parsis. The answering association submit that it is not just a matter of RSS conviction, but a fact borne out by history that the Muslims, Christians and Parsis too are Hindus by culture although as religions they are not so.”
2. “The RSS by conviction attaches to the term *Hindu* the cultural and civilisational meaning accorded by history. The answering association submit that the term *Hindu* was synonymous with the inhabitants of Bharat. Bharat was and is even now referred to as Hindustan and its subjects Hindus by culture and nationality.”
3. “The RSS holds on to the cultural concept of Hindu and says that all Muslims, Christians and Parsis are by culture Hindus, although their methods of worship are different, for example Shaivites or Vaishnavites.”
4. “The answering association submit that this integrative and inclusive concept of Hindu by RSS can hardly be construed as separatist or as distinguishing between Muslims and Hindus. In fact, the RSS ideology holds the Muslims as part of and not distinct from Hindus.”
5. “It is submitted that the term Hindu is thus an inclusive concept not limited to any community or a religion and therefore cannot exclude Muslims or Christians and in fact, includes them as Hindu. It is in this sense of the term Hindu that the RSS regards Bharat as culturally a Hindu nation. This is the meaning of Hindu Rashtra expounded by RSS.”

The RSS Constitution

This official statement of the RSS before a legal body, can be called deceptive, misguiding and sheer jugglery. The RSS Constitution finally submitted on 10th July 1949 clearly says that, upto that day, the RSS had no written constitution. The speeches of the Sara Sangh Chalaks and Sara Karyavahas of those days show very well that the RSS was open only to Hindus in the traditional sense and was concerned with the upliftment of Hindus on the basis of Hindu religion and Hindu culture. In the introduction of the first and even the final Constitution of the RSS, it is mentioned that “Under the disorganised conditions of the state, an organisation was thought necessary for the exhaustive resuscitation of the Hindu Society on the basis of its religion and culture”. In the *aims and objects* section of the said Constitution also, this very phraseology is repeated. No one can find even the

words Muslims, Christians and Parsis in the RSS Constitution. So to say it today that *the term as a cultural concept will include and did always include all including Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Muslims, Christians and Parsis* is nothing but an untruth and totally dishonest in every sense. It needs special mention that the term *Hindu Society* occurs four times in the RSS constitution. To include Muslims, Christians and Parsis in Hindu Society is nothing but absurd.

Needless to say that it is a well-planned conspiracy of the leaders of the Sangh Parivar. Broadly speaking, the Sangh Parivar has established a sort of monopoly on organisational grounds as far as Hindutva ideology is concerned, and now they are in a mood to take undue advantage of the situation. The drama of a seminar on the closed platform of Prajna Bharati in July 1996 was nothing but a manipulation for pushing the policy of so-called *Vyapak Hindutva* put before the Government (the Tribunal) in June 1993. **Voice of India** has rightly cautioned the comatose Hindus, “It has become a habit with Hindu leaders to take Hindus for granted and bargain with Muslims on the latter’s terms. Now Hindus have to decide as to how long they are going to be taken for granted.”

O Hindus! A clarion call by a young RSS Swayamsevak (Dr. Shreerang Godbole) having seventeen years of *sanghāyu*, is before you. It is high time for you to warn the protagonists of *Vyapak Hindutva* that you will never allow them to sacrifice the larger and long-term interests of Hindu Society and nation for the meagre and minor interest of political power for the Sangh Parivar.

41. Dr. Vinay Kumar Sinha⁵³

I quite agree with what Dr. Godbole has opined about Islam and Christianity and the concept of Secularism or Sarvadharma Sambhāv or Sarva Panth Samādar etc.

Yes, it is utterly wrong to bracket Hinduism (and its offshoots like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism) with such exclusivist ideologies as Islam and Christianity. It is in fact wrong to regard Christianity and Islam as Dharmas. Let us discuss why.

Dharma is a way of life based on certain principles as enunciated by the great Manu - his ten principles and so on. The basic difference between the Sanatan Dharma and the prophetic religions is that whereas Dharma is the result of the experiences acquired by our seers and sages for a period spread over thousands of years, the Semitic religions are based exclusively on the principles and practices enunciated by a certain individual or a certain scripture and are the by-product of certain special historical and political circumstances. Whereas prophetic ideologies do not permit any deviation from the set principles, Hinduism allows the individual the freedom to march towards greater intellectual and spiritual heights. The door to knowledge is kept wide open in contrast to the prophetic ideologies which actually blind one's intellect.

A Christian is a Christian only so long as he has exclusive belief in the Sonship of Jesus Christ. Likewise, a Muslim is a Muslim only if he has hundred percent faith in Quran and Hadith. A Hindu has no such binding. Being in permanent bondage, the followers of prophetic ideologies cannot but believe that they are following the path of righteousness, and that others are on the wrong path. For them, there is the kingdom of heaven with gardens under which flow rivers; for us, the non-believers, only the hell of fire. They have not only exclusive ideologies but their special Gods as well who are kind to them and them only. So says the Bible: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned* (Mk XVI: 16). And so says the Quran more than once: *And fight them until persecution is no more and religion is for Allah* (II: 193); *O ye who believe! Choose not disbelievers for (your) friends in place of believers* (IV: 144); *And slay them wherever you find them* (II: 191). As has been pointed out, Islam is an exclusivist ideology which isn't under any circumstances prepared to accord respect or recognition to any other ideology howsoever tolerant the latter may be towards it. According to Ibn Taymiah and Syed Qutb the entire globe belongs to Allah and his messenger and Muslims and Muslims only are rightful heirs to it!

As Dr. Godbole points out, some Hindus think it is against Hinduism to criticize other religions. Still other Hindus genuinely seem to believe that resurgence among Hindus would cause permanent damage to the Hindu society and that by destroying what they term *our composite cultural heritage and unity in diversity* we would be making our country weak. Far from it. To them I would like to point out that the so-called *composite culture, unity in diversity, Sarvadharma Sambhāv* etc. have been mere myths; they have never been achieved nor is there any likelihood of their taking shape in future also. If some of our ancestors ever talked of it, it could only be said to have emanated from a state of

⁵³ The writer is a highly qualified medical practitioner living in Ranchi in Bihar.

desperation which they may have found themselves in owing to more than a thousand years of political subjugation. Political subjugation often leads to intellectual deterioration resulting in perverted thinking as well. It is sheer self-deception to believe that the alien cultures which the invaders brought with them mingled with our ancient culture, or enriched it further. It is also a folly to believe that Hindu culture fully assimilated the alien cultures. Such a thing never happened. Moreover, the imperialist forces did not invade India to establish a society where Sarvadharma Sambhāv would prevail. It is only we who have fallen prey to such illusions. Muslims and Christians never talk of it; they have never had such illusions.

Strangely enough, a thesis is being propounded by the so-called secularists that every Indian is a Hindu! This is an attempt to devalue the importance of the term *Hindu* and to reduce it to a mere noun from an adjective. A Hindu is not a geographical creature. Hindus are a nation unto themselves; any attempt to use this term for Muslims and Christians is to deny the existence of a Hindu nation which has been a reality for thousands of years.

Peaceful coexistence with Islam is just not possible. Sambhāv with Christianity is an impossibility too. Such ideas are totally alien to these ideologies. Any attempt to try to assimilate them is bound to meet a dismal fate, as it has for centuries.

Secularism in its Indian form is a highly repugnant term. The very basis of this Secularism is anti-Hinduism. BJP turned secular long time ago (assuming that it was ever committed to Hindutva). Now the R.S.S. too has followed suit. Compared to the self-proclaimed secularists, these neo-secularists masquerading as votaries of Hindutva are more dangerous, more poisonous. For it is they who are making the already intransigent Muslims more and more intransigent, more and more demanding, more and more obstinate. What we need to do is to expose them thoroughly, to punish them to the hilt, for it is these people who are the greatest enemies of the Hindu Nation.

Alas! the greatest misfortune of the Hindu Society has been that it has never in its long history turned communal. This incidently is the greatest reason leading to our subjugation from time to time. If we want to keep alive the spirit of Hindu Nation alive we Hindus have got to be communal. Without Hindu communalism, the Hindu Nation has no future whatsoever. True nationalism resides in Hindu communalism, not in foolish Secularism.

42. Shrikant G. Talageri⁵⁴

Dr. Godbole's views are stated so succinctly, so concisely and so comprehensively that there is really little need for any comments on them: it is for the Sangh leadership to read his views very carefully and repeatedly, and to seriously ponder over the matter.

However, I would like, nevertheless, to make the following elaborations of my views on the following points raised by Dr. Godbole as well as by **Voice of India** in their comments on his views:

1. *Leaders of the Sangh Parivar look like following the Congress path in taking Hindus for granted; and their concept of sarva-pantha-samādar is even more dangerous than the secularist concept of sarva-dharma-samabhāv.*

This is true. But, apart from the ideological aspect of it as stressed by Dr. Godbole, the practical aspect of it is even more fraught with danger for the future of Hindutva and Hinduism:

Congress secularism can only succeed in subverting the consciousness and morale of the *general* Hindu public. The more conscious Hindus remain unmoved by it. Similar secular propaganda by the Sangh Parivar, however, directly targets these sections of Hindu society, and can succeed in effectively and completely neutralising Hindu sentiments, Hindu reactions and Hindu activism.

Today, the situation is such that the Hindu plank on the national level has been totally appropriated by the Sangh Parivar. Opponents of Hindus and Hinduism have often tried to create schisms within the Hindutva front, either by trying to drive wedges between different groups within this Parivar; or by floating alternative Hindu bodies. These efforts have only served to underline the need for Hindus to rally behind the Sangh Parivar to thwart such attempts; they only strengthened the monopoly of the Sangh Parivar over this plank.

The result is that when the Sangh Parivar, either misguidedly or deliberately, starts taking Hindus down the garden path, conscious Hindus are caught in a real trap. Supporting, or going along with, this suicidal course is a travesty of all that they believe in, and opposing it would constitute the dreaded sin of playing into the enemy's hands. Either way, they are, in a sense, stabbing Hinduism and Hindutva in the back. This is the grim tragedy.

The whole situation has a macabre resemblance to the situation in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. A deep reading of this classic shows close parallels with the Sangh Parivar, with one difference: the fierce, growling dogs who curb all dissent are missing. The Sangh Parivar is a Hindu family, and, among Hindu families, a decent and respectable middle-class one. Hence these particular creatures are absent from this Animal Farm.

It is the perception of *this* single but significant difference, and of the unique factor (Hinduism)

⁵⁴ The writer lives in Mumbai. He is the *unknown Indian* who became widely known as an outstanding scholar when the late Girilal Jain credited him with demolishing very effectively the established theory of an Aryan Invasion of India in his book, *Aryan Invasion Theory and Indian Nationalism*, published by Voice of India in 1993.

responsible for it, that gives one the faint hope that this Animal Farm will not end up like the one in Orwell's classic, and it is perhaps this hope that has led to this process of stock-taking initiated by Dr. Godbole and **Voice of India**. Whether this process of stock-taking will result in arresting the trend of *Animal Farm* becoming *Manor Farm*, or not, depends on only two entities: *God*, and the Sangh leadership.

At this point, we need not discuss the parallels between Animal Farm and the Sangh Parivar, or list the betrayals of Hindutva and Hinduism by the political wing of this Parivar, the BJP. The only thing we need discuss is the need to arrest and reverse this trend, and the means of doing so.

The very first thing, in my opinion, is that the Sangh Parivar should see to it that the BJP changes its flag from saffron-green to saffron. This is only a symbolic change, but it symbolizes everything.

Till this is done, all other pleas, assurances, acts and actions of the Sangh Parivar must be regarded as so many squealings of Squealer (the smooth-talking Goebbles of *Animal Farm*).

In *Animal Farm*, it must be remembered, the Animals realize the full extent of the betrayal only when they hear the sheep (who are utilised by the leaders to drown out murmurs of dissent with their loud and continuous slogan-chanting), who have all along been chanting *four legs good, two legs bad*, suddenly start a cacophony of *four legs good, two legs better*.

This viewpoint of the Sangh Parivar, even if not precisely expressed in the form of a slogan, was always *saffron flag good, saffron-green flag bad*. H.V. Sheshadri, in his book, *The Tragic Story of Partition*, castigates the Congress for introducing a green strip in the national flag *for the sake of pampering the communal Muslim mind*. He calls it a betrayal of *the most adored and shining symbol of a Nation - of its ideals and aspirations, its history and traditions, the endless sacrifices and sufferings of its martyrs, the prowess and penance of its heroes and saints*.

However, it has been quite some time since the Sangh Parivar's viewpoint appears to have changed to *saffron flag good, saffron-green flag better*. Swayamsevaks who chant *nīla gagan mēñ laharāyéñge bhagwā amar nishān* (we shall unfurl the saffron flag in the blue firmament) on the *shākhā* grounds, change their perspective as soon as they step out of the *shākhā*: it is not the saffron flag of some other party (like the Jana Sangh, Shiv Sena or Hindu Mahasabha) that they hold aloft, but the saffron-green flag of the BJP.

The flag of a party is its own prerogative. No-one can legitimately question the BJP if it changes over to a saffron flag. The fully green flag of the Janata Dal gets countless Hindu votes; and as recent trends in Mumbai (e.g. in the Muslim stronghold of Behrampada in the recent municipal corporation elections) show, the saffron flag of even a rabidly Hindutva-spouting party like the Shiv Sena can effectively garner staunch Muslim votes, if that is to be any consideration in deciding the colour of the Sangh Parivar's political flag.

The only thing preventing the BJP from having a saffron flag is its own leadership. And here lies a fundamental question: is it even within the realms of possibility that this party which does not even

have the guts to paint the colour of its own flag saffron, could ever have the guts to paint the colour of the national polity saffron?

If the Sangh Parivar's followers believe it to be so, it is only because they have internalised the squealings of Squealer and been reduced to the different species of Animal Farm inhabitants - the horse whose only two maxims are *I will work harder* and *the leader is always right*; the sheep who mindlessly memorises and chants every new slogan given to it by the leaders; the cow who is sad, confused and depressed by the goings-on, but resigned to them; the ass who sees everything with a clear, unjaundiced eye, but chooses to remain silent except for a cynical snort every now and then.

There is still, of course, a way; but only if there is the will or desire.

*2. The concept of **Sarva Panth** should include all Bharatiya and non-Biblical, non-Bharatiya spiritual practices, but not Islam and Christianity.*

This is, again, perfectly right. Unfortunately, the Sangh parlance on these matters consists only of hypocrisy and doubletalk.

At a recent seminar held in Aurangabad, the Sangh leaders passed a resolution that Hindutva is not a *dharma-vāchak* (meaning perhaps *panthavāchak*) but a *rashtravāchak* concept, and that it therefore includes Islam and Christianity since Muslims and Christians are also Indians.

This is, of course, intrinsically absurd: from a *rashtravādī* point of view, Islam and Christianity are even more obviously alien than from a *panthavādī* point of view - the two clearly represent foreign lands, cultures and imperialisms.

Hinduism is the name for the Indian *territorial* form of worldwide Sanatanism (call it Paganism in English). The ideology of Hindutva should therefore be a Universal ideology:

On the international level, the Sangh, as the apex organisational body of Hindutva ideology, should spearhead a worldwide revival, rejuvenation and resurgence of spiritualism, and of all the religions and cultures which existed all over the world before the advent of imperialist ideologies like Christianity, Islam, Fascism, Marxism, etc.

On the Indian front, it should spearhead the revival, rejuvenation and resurgence of Hinduism, which includes not only religious, spiritual and cultural practices springing from Vedic or Sanskritic sources, but from allother Indian sources independently of these: the practices of the Andaman islanders and the (pre-Christian) Nagas are as Hindu in the territorial sense, and Sanatana in the spiritual sense, as classical Sanskritic Hinduism.

And this ideology should cover not only religious and spiritual practices and concepts, but every single aspect of India's matchlessly priceless cultural heritage: climate and topography; flora and fauna; races and languages; music, dance and drama; arts and handicrafts; culinary arts; games and physical systems; architecture; costumes and apparels; literature and sciences.

A true *Hindutvarādī* should feel a pang of pain, and a desire to take positive action, not only when he hears that the percentage of Hindus in the Indian population is falling due to a coordination of various factors, or that Hindus are being discriminated against in almost every respect, but also when he hears that the Andamanese races and languages are becoming extinct; that vast tracts of forests, millions of years old, are being wiped out forever; that ancient and mediaeval Hindu architectural monuments are being vandalised, looted or fatally neglected; that priceless ancient documents are being destroyed or left to rot and decay; that innumerable forms of arts and handicrafts, architectural styles, plant and animal species, musical forms and musical instruments, etc. are becoming extinct; that our sacred rivers and environment are being irreversibly polluted and destroyed.

Hindutva is not a narrow ideology: its true vision is limitless. The tragedy is that the Hindutva leadership, *bogged down as it is in the swamp of electoral politics*, is more concerned with making a show of broadening the parameters, of what they themselves seem to secretly believe is a narrow ideology, by bringing imperialist ideologies within its scope. It is as if Sri Krishna, instead of revealing the limitless vision of the Universe to Arjuna, had opted instead to show that he had two faces : a Pandava one and a Kaurava one.

3. Muslims should be viewed not as oppressors but as the greatest victims of Islam. They should be weaned away from Islamic ideology. This is also true. But, in this matter, I have some problems.

Indian Muslims are not generally first generation converts to Islam. They are Muslims from birth: born of Muslim parents, and members of distinct Muslim communities or *jamaats*.

Weaning away entire communities of Muslims away from Islam is rather difficult to imagine. Weaning away individual Muslims, also, is no easier: it is like asking an individual Hindu to cut off all his ties with his caste and community. In the case of a Muslim individual, it is worse: hated by his erstwhile *jamaatwalas*, shunned by secularist and leftist Hindus, ignored by a caste-bound Hindu society, and only indifferently welcomed by conscious Hindus, his position is not likely to be an enviable one.

Without actively discouraging such a process, however, the following fourfold policy should be adopted:

1. Muslims, whether they remain staunch Muslims or awakened (weaned-away) ones, should be assured that as individuals and as general groups, they will get *full* justice in every sense of the term: the position of a Muslim individual or group will be *exactly* the same as that of a Hindu individual or group. The BJP's slogan, *justice for all, appeasement of none* says it in a nutshell.

But there will be *no* religious appeasement or pampering, *no* positive discrimination in their favour, and *absolutely no* tolerance of any expansionist agenda. The establishment of a Hindu *rashtra*, with all its symbolism and ethos, and of a Hindu cultural policy as suggested earlier, will be the primary aim of Hindutva ideology.

2. Hindus will have to be weaned away from Islamic ideology or its more poisonous form - secularist ideology. In this respect, **Voice of India** is doing *everything* and the Sangh Parivar

nothing.

What is necessary is an all-out *pracār* and *prasār* of **Voice of India** books, which, in entirety or in essence, should be indispensable reading for all conscious Hindus; and whose import should be common knowledge among all Hindus.

3. Hindus will also have to be weaned away from evils *within* Hinduism. This is also a must, and such activity should not be erroneously regarded (except where it is part of secularist strategy) as leading to a weakening of the Hindu front or the Hindu morale.

Hindus should adopt as open an attitude to *pantha-cikitsā* of Hinduism as to that of Islam and Christianity: there is nothing to fear, since Hinduism in its essence will shine out white and pure in comparison with Islam and Christianity in their essence. It will only be cleansed of impurities which stand in its own way.

Can we honestly expect Muslims to be weaned away from Islam if they can expect nothing better from Hinduism? The VHP had reconverted thousands of Rajput Muslims in Rajasthan to Hinduism; but, as Sangh leaders wryly admit in private, the subsequent treatment of these reconverted brethren by a caste-bound Hindu society has not been a very happy one.

The situation between different caste groups within the Hindu fold, and even the outlook of the Sangh Parivar in such matters (*although, to be just, the Sangh Parivar has been ahead of any other Hindu group in genuinely trying to do away with the caste divisions in Hindu society*), have not been favourable even to a consolidation of Hindus behind Hindutva, let alone to a weaning away of Muslims back to the Hindu fold.

Take the Ayodhya case. The Ramajanmabhoomī case has everything in its favour. But with what face can the Sangh Parivar approach the *low-caste* Hindus of certain areas in, say, Marathwada - where they are not allowed to enter a temple, but would be allowed to enter a mosque if they became Muslims, or perhaps even without that prerequisite - with the suggestion that the Babri Masjid be replaced once more with a Rama temple? Especially if those *low-caste* Hindus happen to be aware of certain Sangh publications which glorify or whitewash the *interpolated story* in the Valmiki Ramayana where Ram cuts off the head of a *low-caste* Shambuka for the sin of performing ritual austerities?

Or, again, there is the incident in Rajasthan, under a BJP government, where a *low-caste* woman was allegedly raped by a gang of *upper-caste* men. The *upper-caste* judge let them off with the remark that her charges were false, on the ground that *upper-caste* men, including a brahmin, could never have raped a *low-caste* woman! The leftists had a field day, while the Sangh Privar maintained an ominous silence. Certain BJP MLAs, however, held a massive rally in which the alleged rapists were feted, and a resolution was passed demanding that the woman be tarred and paraded as a punishment for defaming decent people.

Striking hard, and *really hard*, at the roots of this intra-Hindu injustice, and, what is more, being seen to do so, is a primary requisite of Hindu polity. No Hindu (let alone a weaned-away Muslim) should

feel doubtful about getting justice in a Hindutva-based set-up.

4. Hindu organisations suffer from certain crippling disabilities and liabilities vis-à-vis *minority* organisations. Except for the occasional, and practically inaudible, whimper, the Sangh Parivar has done *nothing* about it.

Because of this, it is Hindu groups and sects which are being weaned away from Hinduism. It is easy to blame these groups and sects, and to tell them: “You are suffering from injustice, and we are being grossly indifferent to your woes in this respect; but you must suffer in silence and continue to call yourself Hindus.”

It would be in the interests of justice, however, if the Sangh Parivar took up this matter on a war-footing, staking its all in a bid to ensure that Hindus do not have to suffer for being Hindus in this land.

As I said before, it all depends on two entities: *God* and the Sangh leadership.

If the Sangh leadership refuses to take stock of the situation, or responds with the usual evasionist squeals. “We know all these things, we do not require *you* to tell us; why don’t *you* do something instead of doling out advice to us; we are doing everything that is required to be done, but in the *proper* way as only we know how; you will find out in good time, trust us - then only *God* can help us.

43. Mrs. Leela Tampi⁵⁵

First Document

We Hindus find it deeply distressing that quite a few Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leaders of national stature have taken to propagating among the Hindu public certain proposition to propitiate the Muslims. These propositions, besides being false and misleading, are highly dangerous to Hindu society as they implant Negationism - the denial of the centuries-long Muslim havoc in India - in the Hindu mind. They also conceal the truth that it is Islamic theology, based on Quranic exhortations, that is the direct inspiration for all Islamic atrocities.

The systematic spreading of these deceptive propositions among Hindus for constructing an all-accepting attitude to Muslim overlordism and also the continuing Muslim threat, borders on brainwashing. This Negationism will entrap Hindus into a sense of false security, and endanger the very survival of the Hindu Nation. In short, it is making the Hindus sitting ducks for Muslim aggression.

Let us take a close look at some of the pernicious anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim exhortations now being insidiously propagated by some of our national leaders among the trusting Hindu public.

1. *What is the harm in adding Jesus and Muhammad to the 33 crore Hindu gods and goddesses?*

This exhortation - dressed up as an innocent supposition - to Hindus is so mischievous as to be actually subversive. For it sabotages our precious Hindu identity, pride and also honourable existence.

The reasons are not far to seek. To begin with, the notion that Hindus have 33 crore *gods and goddesses* to worship is a vicious, calculated lie spread by Christian missionaries to bring Sanatana Dharma into disrepute among the monotheistic Westerners by deliberately mistranslating the Sanskrit term *deva* as *god*.

The truth is that the 33 crore *devas* referred to in the Puranas and Itihasas are not gods and goddesses at all in the usual Western sense.

Our *devas* include luminous heavenly beings like Gandharvas, Apsaras, Kinnaras, Vasus and many others. They are always present in the background in our sacred books, and accomplish many vital assignments. They are also well represented in the sculptures in our temples. But they are never worshipped.

We are, of course, proud of our real and traditional Gods and Goddesses (the correct appellation would be Bhagavan and Bhagavathi), and we take immense joy and find spiritual

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fulfillment in offering them worship. The Gods and Goddesses we worship are Vishnu and Lakshmi, Shiva and Parvathi, Saraswathi, Brahma, Ganesha, Karthikeya and Dharma Sastha, and also their various forms. We worship them as the several beautiful facets of the same Ultimate Reality.

Our Gods and Goddesses themselves know that they represent the same One Truth, the One Reality that is everywhere, in every being, in every thing, and which is the Ground of Being for all. Hence they revere each other, and bless every righteous human being, no matter which God or Goddess one worships.

The Semitic Gods, Yahweh and Allah, and Yahweh's only-Begotten Son Jesus and Allah's Final Prophet Muhammad, offer a study in stark and tragic contrast. Yahweh and Allah are constantly boiling over with jealousy and wrath for others gods and screech in anger that these other gods must be eliminated. With a cruelty that is worse than satanic, they also cry for the blood of the worshippers of other gods through the media of the only-Begotten Son and the Final Prophet.

Jesus claimed that his father Yahweh is the only true God, that his religion is the only true religion, and that followers of all other religion will be roasted for all time in the terrible fires of hell - not for crimes like murder and pillage, but for not believing in the unproved claims of Jesus!

Later on, Muhammad said the same to his followers with more hideous vindictiveness and hatred. He declared that those who believed in him will go to heaven full of sensual enjoyments and all kafirs who did not (read Hindus) will burn horribly, screaming in pain, and denied water (but given new skins to be burned) for all eternity - mind you, for all eternity - in the dreadful fires of hell.

So for both Jesus and for Muhammad, our Gods and Goddesses whom we worship with all our heart and soul are hideous excrescences to be cursed and loathed and at once destroyed.

Thus Jesus and Muhammad are implacable, hate-filled enemies of our gentle, tolerant Gods and Goddesses. Hence installing the two of them side by side with our own Gods will be as insulting to our Gods, our sages and ancestors (millions of whom have been killed as infidels on Allah's orders transmitted by Muhammad) as worshipping Ravana along with Sree Rama and Kamsa along with Sree Krishna.

This being so, why should we, long-oppressed Hindus, cringe and crawl in the dirt even more, and worship the jealous gods of the Bible and the Quran who have instilled so much hatred for our Gods and Goddesses into their followers and inspired the destruction of thousands of our great and ancient temples where we were worshipping our own Gods and Goddesses with devotion?

We Hindu could spend our time much better by keeping our holy temples in beautiful

condition, by arranging much better facilities for our pilgrims, and also by offering worship to our chosen Gods and Goddesses with greater sincerity and devotion.

2. *All religions (including Islam) lead to God.*

Here we have first to make up our minds as to what we mean by religion. Or Shastras and our sages have always taught that true religion or spirituality is our striving to reach God through right conduct, self-sacrifice and sincere seeking. Sanatana Dharma teaches that not only all human beings, but the whole of creation, both animate and inanimate, are overflowing with the presence of the Divine, and thus worthy of reverence. True spirituality is the recognition - and knowledge - that the same Supreme Self is immanent in all, and transcends all. Also that each seeker after Truth must continue his seeking till he has experienced the Truth within himself.

Unlike Muhammad and Jesus, our Avatars and sages never divided humanity into two - the believing aggressors and the ready-made victims of the privileged believers, the Christians and the Muslims. Muhammad also laid down the unalterable rule that it is the holy duty of every Muslim to wage permanent war on the infidels and establish the supremacy of Allah and his Prophet by forcible conversions, mass slaughter, pillage, arson and sadistic destruction, that is to say, jihad. Muslim have a special duty to desecrate temples and destroy the idols the kafirs worship. We Hindus should know; we have been at the receiving end of jihad for the last 1200 years - and it continues to be perpetrated on us even today.

Such monstrous, anti-human doctrines are not religions, but only the political totalitarian tyrannies. They certainly do not lead to God but only to the lowest levels of human depravity.

3. *Islam is good, but Muslims are bad.*

This statement is not only irrational but also senseless. It is also extremely dangerous for the survival of Hindu society as it prevents Hindus from taking cognizance of the real nature of the peril that is facing them and adopting defensive measures. The ridiculous statement that Islam is good reflects the tragic failure of Hindu leaders - from Muhammad bin Qasim's time till today - to trace the motivating factor behind the horrendous desecrations, massacres, slave-taking, molestation of women, rapine and destruction by the Muslims that our Motherland has suffered for so long. The Quran teaches to do all these to the kafirs as the mandatory duty of every Muslim. Not recognising this tragic fact, Hindus went on respecting Islam as a religion which resulted in the Partition and the butchering of millions of Hindus, the on-going tragedy of Kashmir, and the bombing and rioting by Muslims everywhere in the country.

People are more or less the same all over the world - many good, some bad - except, of course, where they are subjected to inhuman brainwashing. Brainwashing turns ordinary people into killers, as happened to the Nazi killers of Jews, the Communist killers of workers

and peasants, or the Arab killers of kafirs. The pre-Islamic Arabs were a liberal, civilized people who never attacked their neighbours, nor desecrated their temples. The advent to kafir-hating Islam changed all that. Islam taught that it was the most sacred obligation of the Arabs to Allah to kill and plunder the kafirs, no matter how innocent and good the latter were.

Subjected to this cold-blooded brainwashing, the previously peace-loving Arabs turned into the scourge of half the world, destroying great and ancient civilizations wherever they established Islam and Arab imperialism. Now we find the Egyptians, whose ancient civilization the invading Arabs ruthlessly destroyed, calling themselves Arabs. Such is the power of theological brainwashing.

Muslims in India at present are a totally brainwashed people under the tyrannical rule of the mullahs. It is quite true that Indian Muslims are the victims of Islam. But they happen to be very compliant and willing victims.

The great tragedy facing all of us Indians is that even the thinking, discriminating Muslims - and there are many of them - have utterly failed in their duty of freeing their gullible fellow Muslims from the shackles of slavery to the fatwa-issuing mullahs. The progressive Muslims seem to have been driven underground by the terror tactics of the all-powerful Islamic clergy.

4. *If Muslims are told of their common ancestry, they will unite with Hindus.*

Nothing can be more preposterous and fallacious. Every Muslim knows that his ancestors were Hindus who were forcibly converted - mostly by the sword, some by the jizya and other inhuman means. But the brainwashing that Muslim children undergo in *madrasas* makes them identify themselves with the Islamic invaders who are invariably presented as liberators. They become very proud of barbarous invaders and ashamed of their own ancestors. They are also taught to hate and despise the great civilization and cultural heritage of the Motherland as *jahiliya* - mere relics from an age of ignorance preceding the advent of Islam.

Teaching the citizens of a country to hate and despise their own ancestors and homeland is of course the surest and easiest way of making them slaves of a foreign country and ideology - in this case Arab imperialism. This has already happened to the Muslims in India.

If Muslims are to join the national mainstream, they have to be first liberated from the monstrous theology of Islam.

5. *Congress used Muslims. Congress treats Muslims as vote banks. We (BJP) will treat them as human beings.*

This is a dreadful, unforgivable falsification of recent history. In pre-Partition days, the Muslims were still chewing the cud of their earlier imperial glory and arrogantly dedicated to

re-establishing Muslim supremacy in India. They considered themselves the Allah-ordained, most privileged class in the country. True to Quranic injunctions, they were filled with hate for the kafirs (Hindus) and could visualise only a master-slave relationship between themselves and Hindus.

Tragically, Gandhiji and the Congress accepted this supremacist attitude of the Muslims and surrendered to every atrocious Muslim demand, sacrificing every vital Hindu interest. This led to the sickening matricide of Partition and the ensuing genocide of Hindus left at the mercy of the massacring Muslim mobs.

After Partition, Muslims continued to follow their blackmailing tactics which had served them so well with the Congress earlier. In democratic India, Muslims have been keenly aware of, and used to the maximum, the power of their organised vote banks to obtain privileges over the Hindus.

Thus it was the Muslims who were, in a very organised and anti-secular manner, exercising their vote-bank power over the greedy, unscrupulous politicians. Congress, of course, tried their best to win over the Muslim vote bank, but the Muslims did not oblige. They would vote only for those who offered the heaviest price.

It will be the greatest national tragedy if the BJP also falls prey to the vote-bank blackmail of the highly organised Muslims. By now the BJP should have learned that what is relevant is not whether the BJP will treat the Muslims as human beings but whether the Muslims will treat the kafir BJP as human beings. If they do, they will be acting against the dictates of their religion. Let us not forget for a minute that murdering an infidel BJP activist is for a Muslim a meritorious act that will guarantee him a place in the Islamic heaven.

6. *Sufis are tolerant Muslims.*

This is another line of dangerous propaganda unleashed upon the Hindus to trick them into discovering spirituality and mysticism in Islam, thus preventing them from resisting its sinister, devastating aggression. The orthodox Muslims have always considered the Sufis as heretics. They were tolerated by the Muslim rulers as they had proved their great skill in beguiling Hindus by pretending to be mystics and thus effecting mass conversions of Hindus.

All too often, the Sufis were traitors who invited nearby sultans to invade Hindu kingdoms, and then gave all help to the sultans. While pretending to be friends of Hindus, they fully supported the gruesome depredations of the Muslim invaders. They took a leading part in jihad, and encouraged the desecration and destruction of temples. Worse, the Sufis profited immensely from the spoils. Many Sufi dargahs, including the famous Chishti Dargah in Ajmer, to which Hindus foolishly go on pilgrimage, stand on the ruins of ancient Hindu temples. While masquerading as saints, they were in fact the sworn sappers and miners of the deadly military machine that is Islam.

7. Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of the Muslims.

Before discussing the issue, let us take a look at the actual meaning of *ghetto*. A ghetto means a very separate, inferior, and poor part of a city or town in Christian countries where the Christians used to force all the hated Jews to live, as the former did not want any social contact with the latter.

But in India, when Muslims live in segregated areas, it is not ghettoization that is in operation but the supremacist mentality of the Muslims. During the Apartheid rule of white racist Christians in South Africa, the whites also lived in segregated areas as they did not want any contact with the blacks except as servants.

It is this master-race complex and the indoctrinated feeling of religious exclusivism and superiority combined with contempt and hatred for the kafirs that makes the Muslims in India live apart from others. Unlike Jewish ghettos, it is the free and calculated choice and decision of the Muslims to live in segregation exclusively by themselves.

The vast community of well-to-do aristocratic and middle class Muslims live not in ghettos but in comfortable enclaves. Poor Muslims also choose to live in colonies of their own.

Another reason for this self-chosen segregation is avoidance of contact with an open society like that of the Hindus, as it may lead to demand for reforms in Islam. Yet another reason is that it is easier to store explosives and fire-arms in exclusively Muslim areas for the massacring of Hindus.

The actual source of the apartheid mentality of the Muslims is the Quran. The Quran orders: *Believers! do not choose the infidels rather than the faithful for your friends* (5:144). Also: *Believers, know that the idolators are unclean* (9: 28).

Do we have to look farther for the source of the two-nation dogma of the Muslim League?

8. Namaz offered at a disputed site (like Ayodhya) is not acceptable to Allah.

Here our naive Hindu leaders whom Allah hates with concentrated venom, are actually offering advice to kafir-killing Muslims regarding Allah's preferences concerning his mosques. Is this not a tragic joke?

Allah's own Final Prophet destroyed in Mecca the 360 idols that the pre-Islamic Pagan Arabs were devotedly worshipping in their holy temple, Kaaba. And now the Kaaba is the holiest Muhammedan Mosque. The same ghastly destruction and conversion of non-Muslim places of worship was wrought not only all over Arabia but in every other land, invaded by the armies of Islam. From all that is commanded in the Quran, it would seem that the site Allah likes best for his mosque is that of a desecrated non-Muslim place of worship - a Hindus

temple in the case of India.

Knowing this, let us not waste time teaching Muslims about what is and what is not acceptable to Allah. What we Hindus have to do urgently is to take steps to protect our remaining temples from desecration and destruction by Islam. We must also do our best to regain our ancient holy temples now defiled by being used as mosques. Passage of time does not legitimise usurpation.

For this, we Hindus have to act from a position of strength. And to become strong and organised, Hindus have to be informed about the true history of the Quran-based Muslim havoc in India, which is bound to continue unless neutralised by the organised strength of Hindus.

Islam is a closed, imperialist, conquering political ideology masquerading as religion. Hence free enquiry, which will expose its pretensions, is the worst sin in Islam attracting the mandatory death sentence for Muslims who seek freedom of democratic discussion. It is reprehensible that this terrorism is being allowed to continue in free and secular India where Muslims should have the same religious and political freedom and right to free enquiry as the Hindus.

If this enslavement of Muslims by the fatwa-mongering mullahs through sheer terror is removed, Muslims will soon realise the humane values of the cultural heritage of their Motherland - Bharatavarsha. This will encourage them to join the national mainstream, become friends of all their fellow citizens, and a great asset to the nation.

Second Document

It is heart-rending and sickening that our respected leaders of the RSS and some allied organisations have formed the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch - a platform for extending equal honour to all religions - and are busy propagating this slogan, as usual, among the all-accepting, passive Hindus alone.

As we can see at once, the Sarva Panth Samādar credo is a resurrection - albeit more sharp-edged - of Gandhiji's Sarva Dharma Samabhāva which he used to great effect to disarm the Hindus and make them complaisant acceptors of all Hindu-bashing, anti-national demands of the Muslims including the catastrophic Partition of the Motherland.

Many of us Hindus feel that the Sarva Panth Samādar slogan makes an even more unjust and humiliating demand from Hindus than Gandhiji's Sarva Dharma Samabhāva. For while the earlier slogan asked us only to extend equal regard for all religions, what the RSS credo demands is that we Hindus accord equal respect and honour to Islam and Christianity whose basic, unalterable tenet is the destruction of *polytheistic* religions - especially our own sacred mother religion, Sanatana Dharma. This demand is as unacceptable and unfair as asking us to give the very same respect and care we

give our own loving mothers even to those mothers who commit infanticide.

We Hindus also fail to understand the need for our leaders to browbeat us with this slogan when the Hindu people from the remotest past have been a most tolerant people, accepting not only various forms of worship but also severe dissent. The reason of course is the solid spiritual basis and universal vision of Sanatana Dharma. Because of this vast vision, Hinduism never demanded blind belief and slavish obedience.

Mahavira and Buddha were both dissenters. In Islam, then, and also today, they would have been beheaded as apostates. In Christianity dissenters have been burned at the stake. But the Hindus then and at all times accepted and absorbed their teachings and revered them as great sages. Buddha is even worshipped as an Avatara of Bhagavan Vishnu. Thus Jainism and Buddhism and also the more recent Sikhism - are regarded as offshoots of Sanatana Dharma.

While Jainism and Buddhism were indigenous religions and their terminology and ideals easily understood, Judaism and Zoroastrianism from across the seas were totally strange to the people of ancient Bharat. Both these peoples - the Jews and the Parsis - were horribly persecuted and driven out of their ancient homelands - the Jews by Christianity and the Parsis by Islam.

But both these peoples were accorded refuge with dignity by the Hindus of the time and were also given every assistance. While zealously keeping up their very distinct identity and practices, the Jews and Parsis prospered hugely, leaving the Hindus behind.

Thus it is clear as the midday sun that sincere and happy acceptance of even strange foreign religions is the inherent, most fundamental character of Hindu Dharma. Hence the present all-out effort to sermonize the Hindus about their duty to respect other religions is really quite bizarre - as lunatic and redundant as training a lamb to become herbivorous. Our leader know this as well as we do.

This being so, we can only conclude that the real intention of the promoters of Sarva Panth Samādar is not just to make Hindus respect other forms of worship - which they have been doing anyway from the most ancient times - but for some other hidden, unsavory purpose, which cannot be publicised among the Hindu at large, namely, all-out Muslim propitiation.

It is thus quite obvious that the motive behind the formation of the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch is to please and cadge favour with the Muslim vote banks under the control of the imams and moulvis. Our Hindu leaders obviously believe that by disguising the military machine of Islam by this slogan and presenting it as just another religion like Buddhism, Hindus can be thrown off their guard. Then Hindus can be made to believe that 1200 years of holocaust and genocide on Hindus and the satanic desecration and destruction the Muslims wreaked in our homeland as per the dictates of Islam, never took place at all. This will make the Hindus forget about the dire Muslim threat staring them in the face even today. Then the Hindus can be made to accede to the sky-rocketing demands for special privileges by Muslims for establishing their supremacy over the Hindus.

Obviously, our ingenuous Hindu leaders believe that when the Muslims see the Hindus cringing all around them for their goodwill at death-dealing cost to themselves, they will shed their Islamic hatred for the Hindu kafirs and call off the many holy wars they are constantly waging against the Hindus even today from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari. These leaders also believe with sweet optimism that they - the Muslims - will join the national mainstream and start voting for political parties like the BJP.

This is Muslim propitiation at its worst. It is also the stuff mirages are made of.

It is a great tragedy for the Hindu nation that Hindu leaders refuse to learn from the cataclysmical tragedies that Hindus have suffered even in recent times from the blunder of Gandhiji's limitless, obsequious Muslim appeasement at the cost of legitimate Hindu interests and Hindu honour.

In the hope of bringing Muslims into the Freedom Movement (illusory, as it proved), Gandhiji gave all-out support to the retrogressive, fanatic khilafat agitation. This was the cover the Moplahs of the Muslim majority areas in Malabar were waiting for in order to unleash mass slaughter, arson, loot, and forced conversion on their unsuspecting Hindu neighbours. The price for Gandhiji's Sarva Dharma Samabhāva was paid by thousands of innocent Hindu men, women and children who were gruesomely murdered. One favourite pastime of these Moplah jihadists in Malabar was to cut open the abdomen of pregnant Hindu women, show the foetus to the mother, and then cut her throat. Hundreds of children were butchered in front of their mothers. Hundreds of women jumped into wells to save their honour. Temples were destroyed and the images desecrated by putting cow intestines around them. It requires a particularly bestial mind (my apology to the beasts) to desecrate a holy image - the symbol of All-Pervading Ultimate Reality that is the sacred object of worship for other human beings. But all this and more, much more, was done for the glory of Islam.

Referring to these fiendish deeds Gandhiji actually said: *They are a brave God-fearing people who were fighting for what they considered as religion and in a manner they considered religious.* Obviously, Gandhiji did not bother to distinguish between religion and the most reprehensible barbarism.

And what did Gandhiji get in return from the Muslims for all this limitless love and consideration? Maulana Mohammad Ali, who had become Congress President with Gandhiji's support, declared publicly: *Yes, according to my religion and creed, I do hold an adulterous and fallen Mussalman to be better than Mr. Gandhi.* Gandhiji accepted this compliment also as Mohammed Ali's devotion to his religion!

Gandhiji lived to see the Direct Action Day carnage of Hindus in Calcutta organised by the Muslim League Government. Partition, the most horrible maiming and mangling of Mother India, and the worst genocide in history - the Muslim extirpation of the Hindus left in Pakistan at the mercy of Jinnah by Nehru - followed. Today, we have to live with the tragedy of Kashmir, with tens of thousands of Hindus killed, and half a million Kashmiri Pandits, wealthy at one time, now living like beggars in refugee camps.

Gandhiji failed so horribly with his Sarva Dharma Samabhāva credo because he failed to study Islam and hence had no inkling of the massacres, pillage, desecration and forcible conversion it

orders for the infidels everywhere at the hands of pious, God-fearing Muslims. He had accepted Islam as a *noble-faith*.

When our Apostle of Peace, Gandhiji, had to accept such tragic defeat for himself and our ancient nation from kafir-hating Islam, after decades of proclaimed reverence for Islam and abject surrender to every blackmailing Muslim demand for special benefits, can or present-day leaders expect anything better from the Quran-wielding Muslims simply by shouting *Sarva Panth Samādar* - a pathetic rehash of Gandhiji's Sarva Dharma Samabhāva?

Obviously - and tragically for us - our leaders of today have not only learned nothing but also forgotten everything regarding the horrible devastation Muslims perpetrated in India and the blood-curdling atrocities they committed on our ancestors for 1200 years for the glory of their creed - Islam. For it is distressingly clear that Sarva Panth Samādar is a calculated and duplicitous strategy to brainwash Hindu society into making it even more submissive to ruthless Islamic imperialism; and also to make Hindus capitulate without protest to the tyrannical Hindu-bashing demands of Muslim leadership - political and religious. And for this Manch to ask the Hindus to give all honour and respect to Islam is just like asking a sheep to give all respect to the butcher cutting its throat.

What we Hindus can do and should do in the cause of giving respect to all real religions and helping human improvement through spiritual vision, is to do our best to revive the great religions and civilizations of the ancient past that Christianity and Islam have savagely destroyed. We Hindus are the only great civilization to survive - albeit with horrendous wounds and suppurating sores such as the mosques standing at the sites of holy temples. We have, therefore, the moral responsibility to set up a powerful world movement to revive and revitalise these destroyed religions of the world. We should also set up a research foundation to study the remaining traces of these destroyed civilizations, starting with the pre-Islamic Pagan religion of the Arabs.

This effort will serve yet another crying need of all humanity. It will encourage today's thinking Muslims and Christians to reassess their blackmailing, anti-human creeds which are really political imperialist frauds able to masquerade as religions only because of their ability to brainwash and terrorise.

Some proponents of Hindus spirituality like Sri Ram Swarup, whose work in this field has attracted world-wide attention, have already sown the seeds of this vast, humane and global spiritual - vision - and also caused it to sprout. Its fruit will be the removal of barriers erected between human beings on the fatuous basis of belief, by power-greedy imperialists bent on conquest and enslavement of others through sheer terrorism parading as divine commands. Its most precious fruit will be the renewal of the universal spirituality indwelling in every human mind, seeking the Truth.

Movements like the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch cobbled together by Hindu leaders in the hope of propitiating Muslims with an ocean of goodwill, can invite only the utmost contempt and derision from the Muslims for Hindus and Hindu religion. They can see it only as grovelling and bootlicking. Muslims have been indoctrinated from childhood that they are Allah's chosen master race.

To affirm to Muslims that Islam is a religion, will certainly be doing them a serious disservice. For it will be thrusting them - millions of our fellow Indians - into further depths of vicious hate for their non-Muslims fellow citizens.

Muslims must be made aware that if they want fairness and respect for themselves, they have to extend these to others. It is their minimum civic duty. Muslims themselves should banish the word *kafir* and the hate and violence that go with it.

Muslims at present are victims not only of Islam but also of the fatwa-mongering mullahs. In secular and democratic India, no one should be allowed to exercise any kind of extra-judicial power over others. Therefore, it is the duty of the Central and State governments to deprive the imams and mullahs of the power they presently have to terrorise Muslims through fatwa blackmail. Such blackmail should be made a very serious criminal offence.

Equally important, our leaders, instead of sanctimoniously repeating failed old slogans and teaching religious tolerance to all-tolerating Hindus, should make clear a vital point (which they have not even thought of till now) to the *kafir*-hating Muslim leaders and their followers, namely, that in a civilized society respect for religious and other rights has to be a two-way traffic. Muslims should realise that they cannot expect to be showered with fulsome praise when they and their scriptures are heaping the vilest abuse on others, and that Hindus too want their human rights to be respected, no matter what Allah says. This is not the Quranic stone age. We are entering the 21st century in democratic India.

Many of us Hindus also feel that Hindu leaders should be more honest when dealing with this life-and-death issue. Why should they so recklessly waste their time and effort to propitiate the Muslims and bring them into the mainstream, when, as things stand at present, a pious Muslim can never be a friend of the idolatrous Hindu? Our leaders should concentrate on enabling Hindu society to fully react to the ever-present Muslim threat from a position of strength.

For this, the first requirement is to ensure that, in our Motherland, Sanatana Dharma is respected. Tragically, the opposite is the case at present. Just a few examples from the hundreds of terrible disabilities and deprivations we Hindus are suffering in our own land, may be cited here.

It is well-known that Government of India gives a subsidy of Rs. 5000/- to every Muslim going on hajj to Mecca. Every possible arrangements is made by the Government of India and the State Governments for the convenience and welfare of the hajj pilgrims. Seventy crores of the Hindu taxpayers' money is spent on this subsidy for Muslims. This is happening when Islam hates Hindus so much that for a Hindu found within seven miles of Mecca, the mandatory punishment is public beheading. Could there be a worse humiliation for Hindus and waste of a secular Government's money, nearly all of it from Hindu taxpayers?

In stark contrast is the horrible state of affairs in the holy hill shrine of Dharma Sastha (Bhagwan Ayyappa) Temple in Sabarimala in southern Kerala which attracts more devotees every year than any other pilgrimage centre in the world. Millions of devoted pilgrims, after weeks of fasting and

penance undergone with joy, come to this ancient holy shrine from all other States in India, and also from abroad. Unlike in Mecca, there are no public beheadings of unbelievers here, all are allowed to come.

The Central and State Governments should have given all support and assistance to the Hindu pilgrims from far away, at least as much as they are extending to Muslim pilgrims to Mecca in foreign Arabia. But exactly the opposite prevails. As in all Hindu pilgrimage places in India, Hindu pilgrims on their way to Sabarimala and also at Sabarimala Temple itself are subjected to gross and insulting neglect; and worse, also to cruel extortion by all the official and officially supported agencies. The Dewaswom Board which manages the Temple, is only a department of the Government of Kerala which has always been anti-Hindu after attainment of Independence. Not even minimum facilities for resting and ablutions are provided for the devotees. The suffering and ill-treatment inflicted on millions of Hindu devotees are beyond words. The very same Government, without batting an eye, imposes extra-high charges on tickets in government buses taking the Hindu pilgrims to Sabarimala!

There is another irony also. All the offerings of the Muslim hajj pilgrims subsidized so hugely by the taxpayers' money, goes to the filthy-rich Saudi Arabian Government. Thus India is in fact paying *jizya* to an Islamic establishment which finances a whole network of *madrasas* for spreading faith in jihad and hatred for Hindus.

But in Sabarimala, on the other hand, the Government of Kerala takes away and exercises total control over the vast collection contributed by the Hindu pilgrims who are not only NOT subsidized but also finagled and robbed by government agencies at every turn. Can there be a worse slavery for Hindus? Do we Hindus and our temples have no rights at all in our own Hindu homeland?

Another deadly threat and also an intolerable thraldom that Hindu society is being subjected to and against which our national leaders should launch an all-out war, is the distorted Secularism that is being inflicted on the Hindu people by the Government of India with the connivance of all political parties. This criminally perverted Secularism is nothing but the continuation of colonial Muslim and Christian overlordship in disguise.

This deliberately falsified and perverted Secularism was concocted by Jawaharlal Nehru and smuggled into the Constitution by Indira Gandhi during the Emergency. Now it is being used to the hilt by fanatic Muslim and Christian leaders bent on liquidation of Hindus. The fake Secularism that is being inflicted on the Hindus, the most secular-minded people in the world, is nothing but a calculated and dirty swindle. It is now being openly used as sanctified weapon to dishonour Hindus and at the same time to bestow royal privileges on the opulent Muslim and Christian establishments.

Secularism really means equal treatment for all citizens by the Government without regard to religion. But our mercenary politicians are using the Nehruvian version of *secularism* for placing the battered and oppressed *Hindu majority* at the mercy of the pampered and privileged Muslim and

Christian minorities. The Government of India has raised this phony Secularism to the status of the regnant, holiest *mantra* of the State, which has totally eclipsed the much needed basic qualities of the State like national integrity and justice for all. For political parties in India, this *mantra* means nothing but the competitive propitiation of the Muslim and Christian communities. The minority lobbies, with vast foreign funds at their disposal, are always ready to give handsome rewards to politicians for special *secular* favours.

On the other hand, Hindus, who are truly secular, have no religion-based vote banks. The tragic irony for Hindus here is that they are being relentlessly punished for their innate Secularism in the true sense of this concept. And the Muslims and Christians are being handsomely rewarded for being fierce foes of genuine Secularism. Could there be a worse slavery and a more painful dishonour for Hindus in their own homeland than their victimisation through this swindle of perverted *secularism*?

As part of the war which Islamic and Christian imperialisms are waging against Hindus through their minions in the Government and their hired politicians, Hindus are also being denied the basic human right of imparting religious education to their children. Hindu children by law cannot be given this instruction in the natural and ideal place for it - the schools they attend. But Muslims and Christians enjoy this right to the maximum in their schools aided by the Hindu taxpayers' money!

Another grave threat - and insult - to the Hindus in this *secular* education policy of the Government is that, in Christian missionary schools, millions of Hindus children are systematically brainwashed in Bible classes to adore Christianity and despise their own religion. Many minors are converted behind the backs of their parents, and in the name of minority rights and Secularism!

In *madrasas*, which the majority of Muslim children attend, virulent hate-mania against India and the kafir Hindus is constantly injected into the children. These children are innocently receptive. They would have accepted respect for India and fairness to their non-Muslim fellow citizens equally well. But their Muslim teachers fill them with venom against the kafirs and India that is the kafirland for them. This, of course, is the starting point for all the riots, murders and bomb blasts staged by Muslim mobs and ISI agents. They are now spreading deep into the South also. This is also an Islamic minority right!

The organizers and propagators of the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch aggravate the explosive peril by accepting Islam as a way of worship rather than as a way of waging war. One self-evident danger in this is that it will at once legitimize conversions to Islam among gullible Hindus. Even now, large-scale conversions are taking place all over India with Arab money and other inducements. If Hindu leaders start paying homage to Islam as a religion, the would-be convert, falling prey to fraud and bribery, can at once justify his perfidy by saying: *If all religions are equally good, where is the harm in converting?*

The horrendous threat to the country and Hindu culture that conversion to Islam poses will be evident when we realise that the Hindu Holocaust that was the Partition of Bharat and the formation of Pakistan, took place only because of the conversion of Hindus to Islam. While the

Hindu ancestors of present-day Pakistanis loved Bharat, their Muslim descendants spew venom on Bharat, and their most cherished goal is its destruction and replacement by a Hindu-extirpating Islamic state. This applies to millions of converts to Islam living in India also.

Let us not forget for a minute that Jinnah, who maimed and mutilated the Motherland and caused the genocidal slaughter of millions of innocent Hindu men, women and little children for the sake of Islam, was the grandson of a Hindu convert. Such is the destruction and hate and bloodshed that lurk behind conversion. But for the conversion of a majority of Kashmiri Hindus to Islam, the diabolic distancing from the Motherland would not have befallen Kashmir, the great seat of Hindu religion and culture from times immemorial.

The fact is that conversion to Islam (or Christianity, as can be seen in the North-East) makes the convert an enemy of India and Hindus as had been seen by Swami Vivekananda a hundred years ago.

The so-called Secular Government of India allow the free use of money and force and fraud and even open threats for conversion to Islam. Rather than genuflect before Islam with the Sarva Panth Samādar credo, Hindu leaders should organise effective defensive measure for Hindu society so that the genocide our forefathers suffered at the hands of Muslims are not inflicted all over again on our children.

We feel forced to tell to the leaders at the helm of the Manch that all our available effort and energy, always in such short supply, should be concentrated on giving vitally needed support to our weakest brethren - the Tribals and the Dalits. The conversion and consequent elimination of Hindu Nagas by Christian missionaries is now complete. They almost succeeded in the secessionist war they made the converted Christian Nagas wage against India. Now the Christian missionaries (many of them Indian) are spreading their poisonous tentacles to every State in the North-East, and inciting armed insurrections and mass killings everywhere they have gained a footing. Any Christian missionary can go about converting and inciting rebellion anywhere in Nagaland and neighbouring Mizoram, but no Hindu Sannyasin - not even the Shankaracharya - can enter without special permission! Christian missionaries have banned any non-Christian school from coming up in Nagaland. So a Hindu Naga child has to convert to Christianity to get modern education. Hindu Nagas are officially and quite openly denied their basic human right to education.

The Bishops in India are spending vast sums from their limitless funds for lobbying to get the Parliament enact a law by which the real Dalits will be deprived of their special benefits by getting the same ceded to Christian converts. The real purpose behind the vast effort costing many millions is, of course, to facilitate mass conversions and also to enable the Christians to corner all the Scheduled Caste reserved seats in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies in the States so that the Bishops can rule India. Their effort to accomplish this cultural genocide of the Dalits is getting full support of the Government and all *secular* political parties.

Another mortal threat India and Hindus are facing in the North-East and also in cities in the rest of the country, is the undeclared demographic war which the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh is waging

victoriously by arranging the planned infiltration of millions of Bangladeshi Muslims into India. They are thus able to effectively colonize and capture many urban and rural areas. This underground attack on India is even more dangerous than an open war. In case of an armed invasion, our Government will have to join battle and chase the enemies back into their own land. But this undeclared yet very effective war is being aided and abetted by traitors in our Government and politics who are anxious to corner the illegal votes of the infiltrators. In any other country, such traitorous officials and political leaders will at once be put behind bars. But in India they are the ruling elite of the country.

Just fifty years ago, the Muslims of what is now Bangladesh had insisted that they were a separate Islamic nation and could not live in amity with Hindus. They had also declared that they would launch a civil war if East Pakistan was not formed out of Bengal. And after most of Bengal was ceded to Pakistan, most of the Hindus there were ruthlessly driven out into India. Now these very Muslims are pouring into India not in lakhs but in crores. Such is the contempt these Bangladeshi Muslims (and local Bengali Muslims who aid and abet them) have for the Indian Government and Hindus that they have already started asking for a Greater Muslim Bengal including all of West Bengal and Assam. We must keep in mind that not one of these crores of Muslim infiltrators has given up the Quranic exhortation to kill the idolators. In fact each of these infiltrators is a time-bomb for Hindu society. They are allowed to live freely in India with stolen citizenship rights.

Another burning question to the leaders of the Manch: Before we proceed further with this campaign for bestowing all honour and respect on Islam, should not we Hindus focus our attention on ourselves and ensure that Sanatana Dharma, the highest expression of the civilization of Bharat, and also its sacred symbols, are given the respect they deserve? The most sacred, cherished episodes in our Itihasas and Puranas are grotesquely parodied and heinously insulted regularly on television and in the movies. Our national dailies publish filthy attacks on Hinduism and Hindu sacred figures - even Gods and Goddesses - and also on all Hindu causes.

These calculated attacks on Hinduism and Hindu sacred symbols are quite clearly a part of the relentless psychological war being waged by the Islamic and Christian establishments on the all-accepting Hindus in order to destroy their self-pride and make them steeped in self-loathing and self-hate; they can thus be made an easy prey for the Muslim and Christian missionaries and the secularists. Till today, very little has been or is being done to discourage these licentious insults to Hindu Dharma going on all around us under cover of *secularism* and *freedom of expression*.

We Hindus believe that, under these circumstances, the duty of the leaders of the Manch is not to further victimise the Hindu victims by demanding respect for their persecutors and killers but to organize an All India Hindu Restitution and Reparations Organisation.

The greatest service the leader of the Manch can render to the Hindus and also the Muslims is to emancipate Muslims from the prison-house that is Islam. There are many enlightened Muslims among us who have love for the Motherland, and goodwill for their Hindu fellow citizens. Tragically now, all of them seem to be too terrified of the fatwa-mongering mullahs to come out in the open. For them, Tasleema's fate is a great deterrent.

But 200 years ago when Europe was in the grip of inquisitorial Catholicism, it was the enlightened Christians who rose to the occasion and liberated Europe and the Christian masses from the fiendish tyranny of the Popes and the Church. Later, in the United States of America also, freedom of religion and expression were accepted as the most fundamental of human rights because of the dedicated efforts of freedom lovers.

If a thousand good-hearted Muslims loyal to the nation will assert their right to freedom of enquiry and expression, they too could render this priceless service to fellow-Muslims. Surely the mullahs cannot get a thousand great Muslim leaders killed or banished at the same time - at least not today in democratic India.

It is no one's case that Hindus, who have at all times been civilizationally a peaceful people, should return hate for Muslim hate, howsoever institutionalized and rabid. But at the same time, we Hindus should take steps to ensure the survival of the Hindu Nation as a great and humanising force in the world. Let us not forget for a minute that Islam, the malignant foreign invader, has already robbed us Hindus of one-third of our Motherland and one-fourth of our people, who have been turned into our enemies on the basis of their new religion - Islam. We should also learn not to cower and grovel as we have been doing till now and assert our strength, human dignity and citizenship rights to the full.

Our sages declared in the anterior most times: ***ekam sad viprah bahudha vadanti***: *Truth is one but sages call it by various names.* This axiom has resonated in our holy Motherland through the ages, and it is a living, great truth for us Hindus. But the vital fact here is that our sages were referring to the Universal and Ultimate Truth; and NOT to maleficent political ideologies for conquest, enslavement and plunder claiming legitimacy under untested claims of *divine* sanction from God Himself. Such claims of divine exhortation for genocidal slaughtering of innocent people and also rapine to bring the world under the command of this self-appointed God, is a grotesque perversion of the very idea of Godhood.

We Hindus are thrice blessed that Sanatana Dharma does not impose on us any blind belief - be it of the only true religion, or the only true God, or the only-Begotten Son, or the Last Prophet. Nor does our religion force blind obedience on us. We are given limitless right to free enquiry, and freedom of expression, and choice of faith.

This is beautifully illustrated in the last chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. After bestowing the Supreme Knowledge on Arjuna, Bhagavan Sree Krishna says to him: *I have thus declared to you Wisdom, which is the greatest secret of all secrets. Having reflected upon it fully, you now act as you choose.* This personal autonomy and total freedom of action is the life-breath of Sanatana Dharma, and the secret of its survival against great and deadly odds.

The Muslims of India should now realise at least the self-evident fact that it is in their own interest to discard their hatred and aggression against Hindus and join the national mainstream as loyal Indians.

For our part, let us long-oppressed and long-persecuted Hindus put aside our obsession with Muslim appeasement. Let all of us Hindus jointly dedicate ourselves, with courage and determination, to build a proud, dynamic and powerful Hindu Nation, if need be, all by ourselves.

It is quite within our capability to do it. For, as our sages from immemorial times have taught us, we Hindus are Amritasya Putrah - the Children of Bliss.

Let us proclaim from the mountain-tops for all the Muslim and Christian world to hear: We are not kafirs, nor are we heathens. Each one of us, the beloved child of Bharat Mata, is a Child of Bliss.

44. B. K. Verma⁵⁶

I am highly grateful to you for sending to me the views of Dr. Godbole on the recent efforts of some Hindu organisations at bringing Muslims into Indian mainstream by preaching equal respect for every religion. But the exercise is futile and will only weaken the structure of the nation.

Instead, we must give serious thought to the ailments which are bedevilling the nation. Why even after so much accommodation of almost every demand, reasonable or unreasonable, Muslims make a show of disaffection and dissatisfaction? What is wrong with our approach? Why there is non-assimilation of Muslims in the Indian ethos? Particularly when the breed of Indian Muslims is of indigenous origin.

We cannot approach these questions without going into the particular mindset of Muslims and the absolute tenets of Islam. Muslim fundamentalism has acquired an added belligerence all over the world after the new-found power of petro-dollars. This is the reason why the civilized world has condoned open acts of barbarism, terrorism, murder and inhuman acts committed by Muslims. Confinement of 50 odd diplomatic personnel of the USA in Iran by Khomeini, burning to death of 300 people who had committed the crime of watching a cinema show in Iran during Ramzan, covert and overt support to terrorists by Libya, are a few of the many instances of flagrant violation of the norms of civilized behaviour.

Dr. Godbole is absolutely right in saying that Islam is exclusivist. There is nothing like a liberal Muslim. Islam does not allow for any relaxation in its fundamental doctrines and its adherents fanatically insist on the observance of every tenet supposed to have been handed over by Mohammad or the Ulema following him. The same cannot be said of Hindu religion. Unlike a rigid rock pillar, it has swayed with every gust of wind and every breeze like a shoot of grass whenever new ideas came its way. In the process, it gets updated and renewed. You can interpret this flexibility as its weakness or as its strength according to your own viewpoint.

Merciless butchering or mass-scale massacre of non-believers (in Islam), called Jihad in medieval times, might be dismissed today as the work of illiterate zealots, but recent instances are a sad reminder that the same Muslim psyche continues. Massacre of innocent Israeli sportsmen at Munich by the Black September organisation, pronouncement of death sentence on the actors, writer and director of a play staged at Sharjah, the relentless hounding of Salman Rushdie, the death sentence pronounced on Taslima Nasreen, death sentence to a Christian teenager in Pakistan, are but a very few of the instances where the victims had knowingly or unwittingly said something supposedly derogatory or derisively of the Prophet or Islamic belief. The extent to which Muslims can go is best illustrated by the howling protest made when Azharuddin was stopped from signing his name for a shoe company simply because his name included that of the Prophet.

⁵⁶ The writer, who lives in Lucknow, is a retired government servant. As a Swayamsevak of the RSS he saw from close quarters the all round rot growing at all levels of the bureaucracy due to bogus ideas sponsored by political parties.

Their rabid intolerance of any other belief is manifest in the flight of Zoroastrians from Iran, the persecution of Kurds, Ahamadiyas, Bahais, etc. Egyptian leaders are under a constant threat of elimination by fanatic Muslim fundamentalists simply because they are perceived as pursuers of a soft policy towards Israel.

Perhaps there is no better illustration of the strangle-hold of obscurantist elements over the Indian scene than the events after the Shah Bano verdict. How after encouraging Arif Mohammad Khan to speak in Parliament in favour of the judicial pronouncement, Rajiv Gandhi beat a hasty retreat when Ziaurrahman Ansari and others of his ilk launched an abusive diatribe on the judgment and even cast aspersions of the judges themselves. The legislation nullifying the decision in that case is a classic example of a *sovereign* government buckling under the weight of fanatic dogma, and subversion of judicial process. One could go on and on as instances upon instances like this pile up. Today, even the talk of a common civil code raises the hackles of Muslims and sends shivers down the spine of those who have an eye on the Muslim electorate.

So what should be the approach? Should we try to reform them? Should we pursue a policy of pure Hindu Rashtra? Or should we appease them and thereby hope to get them converted into a community which thinks itself as a part of the nation?

We have seen that the Indian Government after independence, whether it be of the Congress or of other combinations, has tried all of these without any success and with disastrous results. With each surrender by the authorities, the Muslims get more audacious and cry for more concessions as a right.

A familiar ruse practised by them is to raise the bogey of persecution and get what they demand - even more than what they originally asked for. Even if they are illegal immigrants, none should question them and accord them full citizenship rights. I recall an instance when I participated in a function organised on the occasion of the birthday of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. V.P. Singh, the Congress Chief Minister of U.P. at that time, was presiding. On the dais with him was Maulana Ali Mian, the Rector of Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow. The speakers were speaking on the life and works of Azad. Suddenly, Ali Mian stood up and started a harangue about the persecution of Muslims in India. He said that the life and limbs of Muslims in India were not safe, the dignity of their womenfolk was in jeopardy, and that when a Muslim male went out his womenfolk kept praying for his safe return home. He also said that he had in his pocket invitations and air tickets from many countries (Muslim obviously) but was ashamed to go as he could not show his face to the people of those countries for being unable to save the lives of his brethren and protect the honour of Muslim women - as if he was the only spokesman for Indian Muslims or was the ruler here to be answerable to the world Muslim fraternity. Of particular note is the fact that it was early eighties and there was no trouble anywhere warranting such comments. And this was no occasion for such an outburst. But the most amazing thing was the reaction of V.P. Singh. As head of the State, he should have severely reprimanded Ali Mian for being the scare-monger that he was. At least, Singh should have asked him to be specific or shut up. Instead, he took hold of Ali Mian's hand and placed it on his head. He said something to this effect, "You keep your hand on my head and I promise to deal with these problems immediately with your blessing."

Appeasement, therefore, does not work anywhere. But, particularly with the Muslim mindset, it does not work to its desired end. And it leaves the other communities bitter. As regards efforts at reforming Muslim society, we have enough evidence that their clergy and their deep-seated fanatical belief in the God-ordained Word excludes any will towards reform. It has by now been well established that Muslims react very strongly to any hint of reform. One instance of their intransigence is their stout refusal to deviate from the practice of triple talaq in one go. It does not matter that other Muslim countries view it with disfavour. Indian Muslims would not accept any reform in this practice.

Regarding the doctrine of Hindu Rashtra, in the context of today's politics this does not seem to be practical. Muslims in India are not a microscopic Minority to be ignored because we are a democratic nation and not a theocracy.

The best course would be to fashion our system in such a manner that no one should have the feeling that his is a race or a community apart, free to do whatever it likes in its own way. In other words, the law should apply uniformly to everyone. In case any one wants to practise his own way, he has to suffer the consequences. Once the message is brought to them unequivocally, they would fall in line in due course.

This is not to say that this solution is easy to achieve and a simple solution for a complex problem. Fifty years of drift has complicated the problem of their integration with the Indian ethos, so much so that they think of themselves as Muslim first and then as Indian. So for now, we have to act firmly and unequivocally.

With these observations to add to Dr. Godbole's comments, I agree with him in that the efforts of Hindu organisations, particularly the R.S.S., in trying to view Muslims and Islam in a soft light and benign hue are all wrong. The clear message to go out to Muslims should be: *If you want to live in India, you have to be Indians.*

45. R. C. Waswani⁵⁷

1. Yes, we would not mind including Jesus and Muhammad to the list of 33 crore Gods if they include one of our Gods to their's. Tolerance cannot be a one-sided affair. Why do we have to do that in the first place? Let them live their religion, whatever that is, and let us live ours. Tripping on our religion at the drop of a hat, should be put to an end. Let the Kaba be opened first to everyone.
2. All roads lead to GOD. All right, let people take their individual roads. Why try to build a highway on Hindu territory only, and at Hindu cost? We are open to criticism; let everyone else first be open to similar criticism and then only a spontaneous response would emerge. Not now. Religion is absolutely a personal affair. Why then thrust upon us something we don't need? No one should carry anyone else's cross. Islam and Christianity are diagonally opposed to Hinduism. One is uphill, the others downhill. Or else these religions would have grown on their own and not with the help of sword and torture. These religions are basically not in consonance with basic human nature. These are always propagated by force, hence must die sooner or later.
3. -
4. Muslims of pre-Islamic era were idol-worshippers. (Probably) Indus Valley Civilisation had its reach there. The wheel of history is yet to take its full turn. By then Islam would have died away with the Muslims. Muslims with or without Islam cannot be subject of rational thinking. Hatred is the very essence in Islam, hence Muslims even if they renounce Islam would take a few centuries to abjure hatred. Even if they become Hindus, it would take them a very long time to cultivate love, compassion tolerance and Ahimsa. Unless each new-born Muslim is put to Hindu incubation, Muslims are unlikely to change.
5. Muslims understand one thing absolutely clearly i.e. *power*. If they have power, they would use it brutally. If they do not have it, they would surrender to power. The past eight centuries bear testimony to it. They ruled India with brute power and lost to the English who were a greater power. The Congress was a weakling from the day one and always ready to compromise for petty gains. Muslims exploited the Congress at every step and opportunity. They continue to do the same. The community/religion is devoid of discipline and inner strength, hence its followers shall always be looking for *power* by riding piggyback. BJP should treat them only as citizens and nothing else. Let religion be kept out of BJP's political planning. They may appeal to individual groups on other matters.. The time has come when even religious appeal has lost its shine. Deeds of Muslims are now quite well known. Let Muslims join BJP as a political party and nothing else. Congress will die by carrying the cross of these religions. Let it die. BJP cannot be kept out of power for long any more, even if all the parties join together, because others lack clarity of objective.
6. A stray instance could not be subject of serious analysis. Sufis are Muslims too.

⁵⁷ The writer is from Bhopal in M.P.

7. It is partly true that Muslims could never produce mass leaders. They lack the ability to unite. They lack discipline. Only a tangible benefit could unite them temporarily and hence even the leadership is temporary. Seizing power is the only goal with Muslims /Islam. No leader is ever accepted for long. Every leader is thrown out brutally after a while. Muslims cannot trust anyone. I repeat *anyone* because every Muslim knows that he cannot be trusted either. Hence nothing goes democratically with them for long. Muslim leadership has never given any positive direction to their followers. Because, they cannot. Their religion is such that love and trust is their last priority. Hence ghetto mentality is not thrust upon them but is inborn.
8. There is not a single tenet in Islam which is not violated by them. It must only suit their requirement. Nothing is important for them but the need of the hour. They violate most of the tenets of the Quran and do not follow the Sunnah. Even Sunnah itself is allowed to be interpreted in various ways to suit passing purposes. Most of the fatwas issued are contradictory and guided by self-serving purposes.

Why go on trying to appease Muslims after all these years of experience? They would destroy whatever is built by BJP/RSS if they are allowed to assimilate. Look at what Sikandar Bakht did when it came to the crunch. And what did Arif Beg do when it came to the crunch? And all this even after a quarter century of assimilation!

Every effort should be made to subject them to rule of law and discipline. In the course of time they may change. But a hundred years would be too soon.

The letter by Dr. Godbole to Shri K.S. Sudarshan

So much energy has been wasted in the past two centuries to convey to Christianity and Islam that all men are basically divine but, alas! to no avail. They continue to maintain their exclusivity. By the way, what are we likely to achieve from this new body of Prajna Bharati at Pune? Are we convinced that a scorpion can be trained not to bite?

In fact, what we are trying to achieve, Islam will achieve by moving in the reverse direction. They will destroy themselves rather than adapt to a Hindu way of thinking i.e. love and compassion. Centuries of hatred for Hindus has pushed even the Quran, Hadis and Sunnah into rear for most of the Muslims. For them, hating Hindus and India is far more sacred than the Sunnah. Expecting them to change would be highly illusionary. Even if a handful of them do change over a period, is the effort really worthwhile?

Islam must die under its own weight like Marxism. Then why waste our energy? The same could be used for educating lesser mortals in humanity and nationalism. Why are Hindu organisations worried about Muslims? Why don't they think of India/Hindus instead? Let whoever finds Hindustan attractive come and be a part, rather than persuade/goad them to come and get reformed.

RSS should concentrate only on its organisation and help overt/covert efforts to overthrow the Congress/UF regimes. The nation has had enough of them. Now is time to throw the yoke, to

combat the menace of unscrupulous politicians raping the motherland.

RSS please, stand up and awake to the need of the hour. Your mother is crying.

46. P. S. Yog⁵⁸

It was indeed very nice of you to give me an opportunity to express my views on the important points raised by Dr. Godbole of Pune.

Alas! Every word of Dr. Godbole is true. This truth has been brought out clearly in many documented publications on Christianity and Islam.

Sarva Dharma Samabāhva

People, who think on these lines commit the blunder of believing that Islam is only Namaz, Roza, Zakat and Hajj which are of course common to all religions in one form or the other. The fact is, and it needs to be widely known, that individual and communal effort for converting other people to Islam and Jihad for achieving it, is as much a part of religious duty prescribed by the Quran and the Hadis for every Muslim.

Only Hindus ignorant of the true nature of Islam can preach the concept of unity of Hindu and Semitic religions. It has never been accepted by the Muslims, and justifiably so. They say, “How can we respect a philosophy which we believe to be entirely misguided? Where is the question of equal respect?” (Dr. Mushirul Huq: *Islam in Secular India*). Had India been an Islamic country run by Shariat law, people claiming that both Islam and Hinduism are true would have been beheaded as is recorded by Muslim historians to have been the rule during the reign of Firoz Tughlaq and Sikandar Lodi etc.

The famous Ali Mian (of Nadwa Madrasa, Lucknow), one of the most respected and internationally recognised authority on Islam today, says in his book, *Calamity of Linguistic and Cultural Chauvinism*: “A man should have not only emotional attachment to Islam, he should also hate all un-Islamic philosophies, thoughts and ideals. As a matter of fact, the Quran expresses at numerous places its hatred for the devil and the standard-bearers of falsehood and ignorance.” (Read Non-Muslims)

Scholars like Maududi, founder of the Jamaat-i-Islami, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Syed Qutb of Egypt strongly assert that Quran divides humanity into two parties: Muslims, the party of God, and all others, the party of the Devil.

Therefore, people who think that Muslims can retain the Islam of the Quran, the Hadis and the Hidayah and yet respect or tolerate the polytheistic and idolatrous Hindus, are living in a fool’s paradise. “*Islam with all its apparatus was conceived and devised as the religion to end all religions*” (M.R.A. Beg), and not to compromise or fraternize with them, except as a matter of strategy. Its scriptures and history repeatedly proclaim that it is engaged in perpetual war against Kufr (idol-worship and polytheism). The celebrated author of the Hidayah says that war with Kafirs is the norm and peace contingent upon circumstances beyond the control of Muslims. This war will end only when the

⁵⁸ The writer lives in Lucknow (UP), and has been doing great service to Hindu Dharma and Society through his writings and publications.

whole of humanity accepts Islam.

Indian religions and Islam are not two currents flowing in the same direction and converging towards a common goal as is often argued. They are in fact two currents of thought flowing in diametrically opposite directions. No sane person can ever think of riding two boats floating in these two currents and reach the same destination. Nothing but disaster awaits such a person. Hindus have been witnessing that disaster for 1400 years. They may go on pleasing themselves by repeating such experiments till ultimately Islam catches up with them. The latest to take up such experiment is the Gayatri Parivar based in Shantikunja (Haridwar). The founder of this organization, Acharya Shriram Sharma, is reported to have said, "The Gita is the Quran of India, while the Quran is the Gita of Arabia."

Only a few people like Dr. Godbole realize that Muslims are what Islam has made them, otherwise how is it that neo-convert Muslim rulers were more cruel and ruthless than foreign Muslims towards Hindus, their co-religionists of a few days earlier? They did not brutalize Islam, Islam brutalized them.

Muslims commitment to Islam

If there is one religion which still sits heavily on its followers in the modern world, it is Islam. It has not shed its Quranic proselytization zeal a bit over 14 centuries. In the words of Syed Shahabuddin, a person who denies even a single word of the Quran or the Hadis ceases to be a Muslim. The Quran and the Hadis have not a single word advocating respect (*adar*) for prevailing un-Islamic faiths.

Preaching Mantras like *equal respect for all religions, all religions advocate non-violence and egalitarianism, and all religions are different paths leading to the same universal truth*, has done incalculable harm to the gullible Hindu.

The modern Hindu youths' knowledge of Islam is nil and their knowledge of Hinduism is confined to what they see in the weekly visits of their parents to the temples, or in abundantly increasing commercial screening of mythological films and T.V. serials (some of them produced by Muslims), or the very effective propaganda presenting Islam as tolerant and secular and Muslims as the persecuted lot by Hindu rulers.

The result of ad nauseum repetition of the above Mantras during last 120 years has been that Hindu boys and girls find no objection to changing over from their religion to what they have come to believe as equally good or better - Islam or Christianity - for petty matrimonial or financial benefits.

On the other hand, Islam has a vast, well-organised and well funded educational system. It runs in India about 40,000 Madrasas and 8,00,000 Maktabs (most of them opened after 1950) besides thousand of Islamic schools and colleges and three Universities. There are said to be about 30,00,000 mosques in India where congregational prayers are held and sermons given by learned and devout persons having views similar to the Maulanas quoted above. It has a large and well-organised Muslim press and propaganda machine publishing lakhs of books and pamphlets every

year in all Indian languages. Young Muslim boys and girls born and brought up in such religiously charged atmosphere can under no circumstance be persuaded into believing that any religion other than their's is true and worthy of respect. The result is a constant flow of youth from Hinduism to Islam.

Another result of this propaganda is that any political party which talks of Hinduism is looked upon as communal even by the vast majority of Hindus fed upon it.

Speaking of propaganda, I can do no better than quote the French scholar *JACQUES ELLUL* from the preface of *BAT YE'OR*'s well-documented book, *The Dhimmi (Jews and Christians under Islam)*:

"One ought not to forget that the terrible war of 1947 in India between the Muslims and Hindus was fought on a purely religious basis. More than one million people died and since massacres had not taken place when the Muslims had lived within the Hindu-Buddhist orbit, one may presume that the war was caused by the attempt to set up an independent Islamic republic. The discovery of Islam's oil resources and economic power, hardly needs elaboration. Taken as a whole, [it] follows a logical sequence: Political independence, religious revival, and economic power. We are now witnessing a vast program to propagate Islam, involving the building of mosques everywhere, even in the USSR, the diffusion of Arab literature and culture, and the recovery of history. Islam now boasts of having been the cradle of all civilization at a time when Europe was sunk in barbarism and the Far East was torn asunder by divisions. Islam as the origin of all the sciences and arts is a theme that is constantly developed."

In France it is no longer acceptable to criticize Islam or the Arab countries. This has led many intellectuals, Christians and others, to be favourably and uncritically disposed towards them. On the intellectual level there is first of all an increasing number of works of an apparently scholarly nature whose declared purpose is to eradicate prejudices and false preconceptions about Islam, with regard to both its doctrines and its customs (History). Thus these works demonstrate that it is untrue that the Arabs were cruel conquerors and that they disseminated terror and massacred those people who would not submit to their rule. It is false that Islam is intolerant; on the contrary, it is held to be tolerance itself. It is false that women had an inferior status and that they were excluded from public life. It is false that the Jihad (Holy War) was a war fought for material gain, and so on. In other words, everything that has been regarded as historically unquestionable about Islam is considered as propaganda, and a false picture of Islam has been implanted in the West, which, it is claimed, must be corrected by the truth.

It is no longer a matter of an exchange of ideas between intellectuals, but rather of an authentic religious adherence. Several well known French intellectuals have made a spectacular conversion to Islam. Islam regards itself as having a universal vocation and proclaims itself to be the only true religion to which everyone must adhere. We should have no illusions about the matter: no part of the world will be excluded. Now that Islam has national, military, and economic power, it will attempt to extend its religion everywhere, including the British Commonwealth and the United States."

This was written in 1980.

If advanced Christian countries like Britain, France and USA are worried about such propaganda by Islam, a sister religion of Christianity, Hindu India can ignore it only at her great peril. Muslim leaders and scholars are never tired of telling their co-religionists, "*India, the whole of it, is our heritage*

because every inch of it had been conquered by our ancestors by shedding their blood” (F.K. Durrani in *Meaning of Pakistan*, Hussain Ahmad Madni quoted by Hamid Dalwai in *Muslim Politics in Secular India*, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad quoted by B.R. Nanda in *Gandhism, Pan-Islamism, Imperialism and Nationalism*).

Common Ancestors

It is no use reminding Muslims that their ancestors were Hindus. They can only feel sorry for them like the Prophet of Islam who felt sorry for his uncle on the latter’s refusal to convert to Islam at the time of his death. Consequently, according to the Prophet, he had to go to hell. While Allah is all forgiving, the sin of polytheism and idolatry is so heinous that even the Prophet was not permitted by Allah to pray for the soul of his deceased mother because she died a non-Muslim. (*Sahi Muslim*)

So those with 33 crores of gods and goddesses can only be looked upon by devout Muslims as denizens of hell to be abhorred and at best pitied.

Sufis, Pirs, Ghazis and Shahids

For those who have read about Sufis, the most ludicrous event is the sight of our big-wigs placing wreaths and *chadars* on their graves and praising them for their humanism and secularism. Their biographies, written by Muslim scholars, rapturously boast of their enthusiasm for converting Hindus to Islam by fair and foul means including threat of death and slavery. Athar Abbas Ali Rizvi, the author of *History of Sufism in India*, feels disgusted by the ignorance/indifference of Hindus. Says he: “To the Hindus who considered him (Salar Masud Ghazi, who offered only the sword or the Quran to lakhs of Hindus), a saint of miraculous powers, the number of their brethren he killed or Islamised was then, as it is now, meaningless.”

This comment of a Muslim scholar who has made a special study of Sufism in India applies to most of the Sufis and Muslim saints, who have been honoured by their co-religionists by affixing to their names the honorific Ghazi (the killer of Hindus) or Shahid (the martyr in war against Hindus). Many of the important ones amongst them are publicly venerated by our Presidents, Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers and Governors setting an examples for the ignorant and gullible Hindu masses.

Need of the Hour

The need of the hour for Hindus is to wake up to realities instead of perpetuating delusions. Listen and give a chance to the realists.

The realist Dr. B.R. Ambedkar says: “This (Hindu-Muslim) antagonism is not to be attributed to material causes. It is spiritual in character, historical, religious, cultural and social. the realist must take note of the fact that the Mussalmans look upon the Hindus as Kafirs, who deserve more to be exterminated than protected.

Another realist Mohammad Ali of Khilafat fame says: “It is poor statesmanship to slur over inconvenient realities, honest and frank recognition of the deep-seated prejudices that hinder it (Hindu-Muslim Unity) and the yawning differences that divide.”

Dr. Ishwari Prasad, the eminent historian, says: “The religions of the two (Muslims and Hindus) are so fundamentally different that coalescence is only possible when some parts of their orthodox religions are forgotten and their place is taken by liberal tolerance.” Hinduism, time and again, has proved its capacity and desire to accommodate. The big and inconvenient question is: Can Islam give up its hatred for Kufr (Hinduism) and its right to destroy it? Can it give up its proselytization of Hindus? Can it officially accept family planning? Can the Muslim Ulema be made agreeable to issue unanimous fatwas to this effect?

47. Brief Responses

I. Dipen Banerjee⁵⁹

At first I must thank you, for sending such a valuable document written by Dr. Shreerang Godbole to a man like me of no importance.

Now I like to say something as a Hindu in general. Though I am not a Swayamsevak, I am closely related with the R.S.S. So I feel sad when I see that even a Nationalistic organisation like B.M.S. fails to understand the basic ideologies of the monotheistic traditions like Islam, Christianity and Judaism, and harps on the much vaunted theory of *Sarva Pantha Samādar*. I fully see eye to eye with Dr. Godbole in his view that Sarva Pantha Samādar goes against the basic principles of the monotheistic traditions and that what we need is not Sarva Pantha Samādar but Sarva Pantha Chikitsā. Dr. Godbole has rightly pointed out that the basic problem is in those exclusivist ideologies which have been propagated for long as Dharma. It is sad that we do not go through the basic texts and try to understand the tenets of Islam and Christianity. The educated Hindus should read the Quran, the Hadith and the Bible if they want to know what has gone wrong with the minorities in India. Then they will see that, inspired by demonic traditions, they are getting ready to destroy the age-old and the most humanistic tradition of the world i.e. Hinduism.

So, I appeal to the leaders of the Sangh Parivar to go through the original texts, and to form a strong movement to free the helpless Muslims and Christians from their demonic ideologies. In fact, *Sarva Pantha Chikitsā* as it is termed by Dr. Godbole is the proper way to proceed. We have to free them from their brutal tradition to end the so-called minority problem. We have to wipe out these ideologies. And this can be done by arousing in them a strong feeling for their ancestral tradition - Hinduism.

Voice of India has done a tremendous job by revealing the inherent doctrines of the monotheistic traditions, and the big lies spread by the leftists in the name of History. I hope that you will join hands with Dr. Godbole to eliminate these ideologies which are known as monotheism.

II. Dr. V.S. Bhargava⁶⁰

My comments on the first document are:

1. This is a fact supported by history that all religions lead to God.
2. This is also historically correct that Congress used Muslims as Vote Banks.

⁵⁹ The writer lives in Town Hall village in North 24 Parganas District in West Bengal.

⁶⁰ The writer is a retired Principal now settled at Ajmer in Rajasthan.

3. As a student and Professor of History, I agree with the statement that Muslim leaders are responsible for the ghetto mentality of Muslims. Therefore the Namaz offered on disputed site or under mental tension is not acceptable to Allah.

Postscript in the letter of Dr. Godbole to Shri K.S. Sundarshan is very much in conformity with my views, i.e. "If they feel that Sanatan Dharma and Islam are worthy of equal respect, I see no reason for the VHP to continue its campaign of Parāvartan of Muslims and Christians."

There should be mass campaigning that time is ripe when Hindus have to decide that they are not to follow opportunist politicians who are worshippers of power and chair because they can barter the hard earned freedom in the name Development. In the background of their cry of Economic crisis one can see their self-aggrandisement. Hindus should decide that for the sake of their very existence and their religious principles they should do or die.

III. G.K. Dudani⁶¹

Many thanks for sending *Time for Stock Taking* pamphlet.

1. I agree with the two brief comments of VOICE OF INDIA.
2. The effort of the RSS to propagate *Sarva Panth Samādar Manch* will be an exercise in futility and will be reversing all the good work done by the Sangh so far. It appears that criticism of Hindu politicians and the isolation of BJP in the political arena, is now telling upon the Sangh.
3. Muslims will never accept Hindus as brethren as it will be un-Islamic. The Koran-Hadis teaches them hatred right at the young age. Fanatic Islamic organisations all over the world are creating fanatics who are brainwashed to think that by giving life for Islam, they will go to Heaven where they will enjoy beautiful Houris. What is needed is making known to Muslims the real facts about the life of Muhammad in a rational and critical manner. But who will do that? Who is going to bell the cat?
4. What I am trying to drive at is that the two will never meet. The philosophy of the Manch will not work: it will be doing harm to the cause of Hinduism. Let the Sangh continue its work and spread to areas where it is still weak. Results are bound to come and the apple when ripe will fall in the lap of the Sangh.

IV. Om Prakash Gupta⁶²

The views expressed by Dr. Godbole on the listed points in italics in the first document and fine points of the second document seem to be quite right. There cannot be any dissent.

⁶¹ The writer is a retired IAS officer now living in Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

⁶² The writer lives in Jammu Tawi in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

V. Prem Sagar Gupta⁶³

I have received your pamphlet *Time For Stock Taking*. I have gone through the entire pamphlet and find myself in complete agreement with Dr. Godbole. There appears to be some mistake on the part of our leaders; otherwise this situation could have been avoided.

VI. A.K.R. Hemmady⁶⁴

My grateful thanks to VOICE OF INDIA for contributing to Amrit Manthan which is already on by circulating Shri Shreerang Godbole's views. I fully agree that what we Hindus need is Sarva Pantha Chikitsā and not Sarva Pantha Samādar.

I have begun writing my response and hope to complete it in a month's time. However, if I am late, please go ahead and publish the responses that you may receive within the time limit set by you (please let me know the limit).

VII. A. P. Joshi⁶⁵

Thanks for sending the booklet *Time For Stock Taking*.

I agree with Dr. Shreerang Godbole's stand.

There is a lot of confusion regarding words like Secular, Majority, Minority, Religion, Dharma, Hindutva, Humanity, Socialism, etc.

We have to produce literature for defining the above words in all Indian languages.

Hindu organizations should be capable of debating with intelligent and cunning people and able to convince ordinary people. Our people must know Hindu Religion, Philosophy, History, Arts and also about Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Socialism, Communism, and Fascism.

This is a difficult job, but because Hindus have lost their political eyesight as said by Vir Savarkar, we have to do it.

The creator of Pakistan is not Mr. Jinnah or the Muslims League but it is the Koran, says Vir Savarkar. Hindus have to remain alert and use the tit-for-tat rule against Islam and Christianity. Hindus have to raise a militia for their defence.

If BJP/RSS really want to make Hindu Rastra, then they must be practical as this is a fight for the

⁶³ The writer is an Advocate who has been legal adviser to several Government organisations and who now practises law in Delhi.

⁶⁴ The writer lives in Mumbai. His response did not reach us in time.

⁶⁵ The writer lives at Panvel in District Raigarh of Maharashtra.

existence of Hindus. This is a fight between Akhand Hindustan vs Akhand Pakistan.

VIII. Hari Narain⁶⁶

Dr. Shreerang Godbole has in his brief comments (as circulated by VOICE OF INDIA) raised many pertinent points; several of them have merit. In analysing these it would be relevant to first go beyond the points of dispute and see why an emerging line of reasoning which (at least on the face of it) gives the impression of a tilt or softening of approach towards the fundamentalist, intolerant or authoritarian aspects of Islam. It is known that in our democratic set-up, social or cultural organizations do not wield power but their political counterparts do so. And political power is the means for propagating your ideology (though it has also become a means for enriching oneself).

The question is whether after the Babri-structure-demolition electoral successes the BJP's ambition to wield powers at the centre was premature. The failure at New Delhi and elsewhere to maintain the rising curve of electoral gains and the isolation from the so-called secular parties has probably made them search for a new vote bank and be perceived as not inimical towards Islam.

The hard choice is between being in the wilderness for years, working selflessly for changing, strengthening and broadening the base till power flows in the right hands, or taking the course that the Indian National Congress took prior to Independence i.e. power at any cost even if it be the partitioning of the Motherland.

IX. K. Narasimhan⁶⁷

This is in immediate response to the pamphlet sent by you, TIME FOR STOCK TAKING: A Swayamsevak Speaks.

Indeed the TIME is overdue FOR radical STOCK TAKING of Islam, by way of an open invitation to the imāms and mullāhs (of Islam in India) for a dialogue on Islamic tenets and Islamic history in India since the 8th century AD. They need to be shown all the specific passages in the Koran and the Hadith that have actually instigated the followers of Islam to perpetrate their ceaseless violence in India against the Hindus. This I believe has never been done before, certainly not in secularist Congress regimes in this century. If the imāms (of P.V. Narasimha Rao's erstwhile audience) refuse to come forward for such a dialogue, they will only confirm their servitude to their exclusivist fanaticism, which is the cause of all Islamic violence and hatred. They will have proved that the Muslims are indeed the *victims of Islam*.

If in the dialogues, the imāms refuse to admit that the instigatory passages in the Koran need to be abrogated, because they are *the divine commands of Allah*, then like the cohorts of Khara-DūshaNa in the RāmāyaNa, they are inviting their own annihilation. They can't have it both ways indefinitely! This should have been their reception in full since the first Muslim invasion of India. At this point

⁶⁶ The writer lives in Gurgaon in Haryana and says that he is in no way connected with the Sangh Parivar.

⁶⁷ The writer is a well known author of several books on several subjects and is known as K. N. Iengar of Mysore in Karnataka.

of time, the alternatives for the Muslims should be: Either reconvert to Hinduism or Quit India (Hindusthan +Pakistan+Bangladesh).

On the other hand, if India can throw up such ministerial heads as it has done now, there must be something radically wrong in our political system. It is just as urgent a TIME FOR STOCK TAKING with our electoral or political system, to deal with our real ECONOMY and our real ENEMIES - Islamists, Communists (Chinese and Local), and Secularists (Congressmen and their stooges).

X. A.K. Ray⁶⁸

Thank you very much indeed for sending me a copy of *Time for Stock Taking*. On all the major points raised by Dr. Godbole I find myself completely in agreement with him.

I recall that quite sometime ago, at a meeting at the Deendayal Research Institute (DRI), at which Shri Sudarshan was also present, someone floated the idea that there should be an *opening towards the Muslims* using people like Waheeduddin Khan. I strongly opposed the idea, for I uncompromisingly believe that it is for the Muslims to take the initiative to assimilate themselves into Indianness, not for Hindus to induce them to do so with various palliatives and concessions. The idea of the *opening* is but another front opened by the Negationists as Koenraad Elst calls them.

I shall be sending you my detailed response to Dr. Godbole's points as well as certain suggestions within the next few days. As against the fashionable condemnation of Huntington's thesis about a climactic civilisational conflict with Islam, which even the Russians have now begun to echo, I believe that there is no meeting ground between the utter ethical nihilism inherent in Islam and its proscription of philosophical thought together with its ideology of world-domination, and what human civilisation stands for. We Hindus have to educate ourselves about it.

XI. Prabhakar Sata⁶⁹

I am in full agreement with the views expressed frankly by Dr. Godbole

XII. C. A. Shakya⁷⁰

There is no doubt that Religion accounted for the foundation of PAKISTAN. Unless immediate and profound action is taken, there will be more Pakistans, Isaistans, Akalistans, Buddhistans, Marxistans, Indo-Anglostans and so forth.

While I comprehend Dr. Godbole's indignation, sympathise and empathise with him, I recommend less talk and more action. Such organizations as Sarva Panth Samādar are - I fully agree with Dr.

⁶⁸ The writer is a retired diplomat with a brilliant mind. He is settled in New Delhi. His response did not reach us in time.

⁶⁹ The writer is a Vaidya practising at Porbandar in Gujarat.

⁷⁰ The writer has given us his true name and address but wants to remain unnamed. We have given him our own name.

Godbole - completely on the wrong tack.

As far as Religions go, the HINDU ideal is completely against any organisation of religion. All of them, in fact deliberately, come between MAN and the INFINITE. Fortunately, there is no HINDU ECCLESIA. Therefore, Dr. Godbole is right in setting his face against any truck with the totally unspiritual and purely power-and-self-hungry institutions that make Religion a narcotic, *the opium of the masses* as Marx aptly put it. The practices of alien FAITHS have even been copied by some Indian indigenous faiths. They have actually made Religion political, and Politics religio-communal. HINDUTVA alone keeps politics free from Religion and Religion free from politics. HINDUTVA alone enshrines Freedom of Thought and liberty of every Community. It alone avoids MINORITISM which has proved as banefully useful to the mountebanks who become politicians in India and pretend to be secular.

For the above personal observations I request complete anonymity as, to re-establish Hindutva, complete anonymity is essential. I would respectfully suggest that only positive steps be taken to reconstruct the Hindu Society by Schooling, Mutual Aid Groups, Hindu Scout Movements, a la NCC, all training of Youth to help in all contingencies, in natural or man-made disasters; the latter being the more numerous and the more noxious. A strong cadre of SEVAKS, including youth of both sexes, is India's most urgent need. Good English-cum-Sanskrit Schools must be given priority. As for those communities which do not care for HINDUTVA, the most telling blow is to ignore them openly and steadily to undermine their foundations by education and the organisation of cadres therefore.

XIII. N. C. Singhvi⁷¹

Received a pamphlet - *Time for Stock Taking: A Swayamsevak Speaks*. And he has spoken rightly. Perhaps we are searching short-cuts to the problem. There are no short-cuts to the problem. There are no short-cuts better than the RSS. The RSS and RSS alone can solve all the problems provided we all Swayamsevaks work earnestly.

Muslims came to India not to be assimilated but to assimilate. They cannot be assimilated unless our country is declared Hindu Rashtra. Once it is so declared, they will do the rest. We need not bother about them. Let us bother about ourselves. We have given them undue importance unnecessarily. It shows our weakness, nothing else.

XIV. T. Suryanarayana⁷²

I happened to read your pamphlet pertaining to the efforts of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to form *Sarvapanth Samādar Manch* to accommodate Muslims and Christians. It is a naked truth that Muslims and Christians do not accept Sangh theology. Only Hindu Organisations put forth this concept to appease the minorities to ascend to the Delhi throne.

⁷¹ The writer lives at Nagpur in Maharashtra.

⁷² The writer is a Freedom Fighter and the editor of *Vaidic Kranthi Patham*, a monthly published in English and Telegu from Secunderabad in Andhra Pradesh. His English monthly reproduced our brochure in full.

It is obvious that Hindus are not in a position to realise their decadent position even though many noble souls tried to awaken them from the stupor. They are prepared to accept Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed as incarnations of the Almighty.

Hindu Organisations have now degenerated to float the idea. It is the misfortune of Hindus that they are being betrayed by their political, social and spiritual leaders. Since last so many centuries, they have been humiliated and yet they are not in a position to reckon and take proper recourse of action. Thousands of temples were desecrated since their invasion by Muslims. Lakhs of Hindu were murdered and women were molested.

I understand your anguish and concur with you. I assert that Vedic philosophy is the only philosophy which covers the whole of humanity -- logical, scientific and rational. Islam and Christianity, the Semitic religion, are unscientific, illogical and irrational. They breed only hatred not only for other religions but also among the different sects of their own religions.

XV. B. M. Thapar⁷³

Please refer to V of I pamphlet titled *Time for Stock Taking: A Swayamsevak Speaks*. Dr. Godbole's views are clearly expressed and I find myself in total agreement.

XVI. B. G. Thattey⁷⁴

I fully agree with the views expressed by Dr. Godbole in the two documents received from you as well as your comments under *Time for Stock Taking*.

It is high time we all realize that the **HINDU NATION OWES NOTHING TO THE MUSLIMS**. However, some political leaders who are Hindu by religion but are sham practitioners of various issues like Communism, Congressism, Socialism, appeasementism, pseudo-Secularism etc., are being allowed by the Hindu masses to speak for them. These leaders are behaving as if Hindus owe something to Muslims. That is how V.P. Singh reportedly gave Rs. 50 lakhs of Government money to Bukhari and his mosque.

I hope your organisation will help in eradicating this self-defeating idea from the Hindu minds.

⁷³ The writer is an industrialist and a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba. He lives in New Delhi.

⁷⁴ The writer lives in Mumbai.

Dharma Versus Dogma

1. Sarva Dharma Samabhāva or Sarva Dharma Sambhrama?

David Frawley

A common tenet of Hinduism is *Sarva Dharma Samabhāva*, which literally means that all Dharmas are equal to or harmonious with each other. In recent times this statement has been highlighted as meaning that *all religions are the same* - that all religions are merely different paths to God or the same spiritual goal. Based on this logic the religious path that one takes is a matter of personal preference, like choosing whether to eat rice or chapatis in order to fill one's stomach. One's choice in religion is merely incidental and makes no real difference in the spiritual direction of one's life.

From this point of view whether one is Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim or whatever, religious belief is not important. Whether one goes to a temple, church or mosque, it is all the same. Whether one prays to Jesus or Allah or meditates upon Buddha or Atman, the results will be similar. All religions are equally valid ways of knowing God or truth. The outer differences between religions are merely incidental while their inner core is one, knowledge of the Divine or supreme reality. Therefore, members of all religious groups should live happily together, recognizing that there is no real conflict in what they believe in but only superficial variations of name and form.

This view of Sarva Dharma Samabhāva has been turned into a political principle in modern India. However, other countries, notably Pakistan and Bangladesh, have not taken it up. Religions espousing an exclusive or final revelation like Christianity and Islam have almost uniformly opposed it. Nor has the idea served to create equality of views even within Hinduism where different sects still compete with one another. Therefore, one is compelled to examine this issue further. Is the equality of all religions a spiritual principle that is fundamentally true or a wishful statement designed to try to create harmony in spite of actual differences between groups? And is it the real meaning of Sarva Dharma Samabhāva?

Let us first examine what Sarva Dharma Samabhāva really means. It is a statement that all Dharmas are equal. But what are Dharmas? Dharmas are universal truth principles and natural laws that are eternally true. For example, the Dharma or property of fire is that it burns. One cannot imagine a fire that does not burn. Similarly there are ethical and spiritual principles or Dharmas. Such ethical Dharmas are Yogic principles like non-harming (*ahiMsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), control of sexuality (*brahmacharya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), and non-hoarding (*aparigraha*), the Yamas and Niyamas of Yogic thought. For example, since no creature wishes to be hurt, to cause suffering to others is a violation of Dharma, while to seek to alleviate the sufferings of others promotes Dharma. These are principles of right living valid for people of all societies and walks of life.

Another such Dharmic principle is the law of karma that tells us that what we do has consequence both in this and in future lives, both for ourselves individually and for our world collectively.

Understanding the law of karma we act in such a way as to promote the good of all, regardless of our outer beliefs or appearances of name and form. Generally traditions that call themselves Dharmic, like Hinduism and Buddhism, regard religion as a way of meditation designed to bring us to union with God or to enlightenment, and to release from the cycle of rebirth. This could be called the Dharmic way of spiritual development.

Hence the question must arise: Is everything that is taught in religions throughout the world a Dharmic principle? Certainly all religions teach us in some way to be good, to tell the truth, to control the senses, and other principles which are Dharmic. Such principles should be accepted by whoever they are said, yet these do not require any religious belief to follow them. They are universal ethical principles and largely self-evident if we look deeply into the interdependence of all life.

Yet beyond this, religions do not have so much in common. Some religions have a creator God, while some, like Buddhism and Taoism, do not. While Dharmic traditions look to enlightenment or Moksha as the goal, for other religions salvation from sin and heaven and hell are ultimate realities. Some religions regard the world as only six thousand years old, others see it as billions of years old. Some allow the use of images in religious worship, others vehemently oppose these. Some religions are tolerant and accepting of other beliefs, others are militant and proselytizing. Religion is as varied as any other cultural phenomenon like dress, language or art. It is hardly of one piece only, or only occurring at the highest level. In fact religion is often a place where worn out superstitions and discriminatory practices are allowed to continue and often appears among the least enlightened aspects of human life.

Many religions contain beliefs and dogmas that are not universally true and some which are not Dharmic at all. Otherwise separative religious identities and the whole history of religious conflict, holy wars, and the effort to convert others would have never occurred. There are adharmic principles in all religions and in some religions, at least at some times, adharmic principles predominate.

Therefore, the question must arise: Are the dogmas and beliefs of all religions Dharmas or universal truths? Clearly not. The Christian belief that Jesus Christ is the only son of God is not a Dharmic principle, an eternal or universal truth, but a belief or imagination of certain people over a limited period of time. It is an idea conditioned by time, place and person that cannot be acceptable to everyone. The Islamic belief that Mohammed is the last prophet is also not a Dharma, but an identification of truth with a particular person and a specific historical revelation. Nor is the belief that an historical revelation like the Bible or the Koran is the Word of God a Dharma or universal law but the opinion of a particular community.

An eternal heaven and hell are also not Dharmic principles. This idea proposes an eternal reward or punishment for transient deeds, which violates the law of karma. While one could argue that such beliefs can be employed as a means to lead people to Dharma, instilling moral and ethical virtues on

the ignorant, it is also clear that they can be used for adharmic principles of social domination. Even within Dharmic traditions are things which are not Dharmic. For example, a caste system determined by birth is not Dharmic. It does not reflect the nature of individuals, of which birth is only one factor, and not necessarily the main one.

So clearly some of the fundamental and primary tenets of different religions are not Dharmic or universal but limited and therefore sectarian and divisive in their application. Above all we must recognize that dogma is not Dharma. That we should respect all Dharmas should not translate into respecting all dogmas and refusing to question them, which itself is adharmic. That all Dharmas are one should not be used as an excuse for adharma to hide itself or place itself beyond question. That Dharma is one does not mean that adharma should be able to hide itself in the garb of religion.

While we should respect Dharma wherever we find it, we need not accept dogma in order to do it. In fact where there is dogma there is no Dharma. Dogma is an unquestioned belief held to be true by faith alone, even if it is irrational. Dharma is a universal law that we can discover through objective inquiry, questioning all dogmas and preconceptions. To uphold the unity of Dharma we cannot sanction and protect all dogmas. To raise the banner of Dharma we must question dogma and the darkness of religious belief, not just in our own religion but in all religions.

Hinduism is the only religion in the world that has defined itself as Sanatana Dharma or the universal and eternal Dharma. It does not require belief or dogma, though it does have its culturally conditioned forms and vehicles to promote Dharma. Hindu Dharma has tried to accept all Dharmic principles and to include all these within itself. Buddhism and Jainism also are called Dharmas and aim at Dharma, sharing the basic principles of karma, enlightenment, and Yogic practices as Hinduism, though defined differently.

However, Western and specially missionary religions have never accepted the Dharmic traditions of India as valid. They are continuing a campaign to discredit and displace dharmic traditions. They generally insist that even a good person cannot gain salvation unless he has the proper religious belief. A good Hindu, by this account, cannot gain Divine-favor unless he converts and becomes a Christian or a Muslim. That is, the Dharma or nature of a person is not the deciding factor in missionary religions but the belief or the dogma that people accept.

Sometimes the further point is made by certain thinkers that, though religions do have their differences that can be major, they also contain an inner dimension of mystical teachings that are the same. However, if we look deeply, we do not find unanimity among mystics either. There are different views of Moksha and NirvāNa within Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Christian and Islamic mystics seldom accept the law of karma and often insist upon heaven or paradise as the highest. There are many levels and stages of mystical experience between ordinary human consciousness and the highest Self-realization which can be quite varied and not free of illusion. Hence while mystics in different religions may have more in common, they hardly teach the same thing. In fact some mystics have been missionaries or taken militant roles in crusades and jihads.

Other thinkers hold that what the original teachers of religions taught was the same but that their

followers later misunderstood or distorted the teachings, for example that what Jesus, Mohammed and Krishna originally taught were the same. Yet if we look closely at the existent teachings of such religious leaders we find very different approaches. Books like the Koran and the Gita are hardly alike either in their tone or teaching. If religions differ so much in the world, there is no reason to believe that their founders must have taught the same thing. Besides if the majority of the believers today see their religion in a certain light we must take that as the measure of the religion, not some mystical view of the religion that most of its believers regard as heresy.

That we might not regard all religions as the same, however, does not mean that there is no value in different religions. We can honor religions for what they have to offer historically, culturally, and intellectually, without having to make them into something Divine and not to be questioned. The Bible, for example, is an extraordinary book with much great history, poetry, and wisdom. But it is hardly the Word of God, true in all respects or for all time and all people. In this regard all religions are part of our human legacy and must be understood, just as all the events and leaders of a nation must be examined to understand its history.

While we should be open to truth wherever we find it, this does not mean that we have to accept all religions as true in order to do so. That there is some aspect of truth in all religions does not mean that all aspects of all religions are true, or that all religions are essentially the same. There is an aspect of truth in art, science and non-religious aspects of human culture. Does Sarva Dharma Samabhāva require equating all these as well?

Hence we must be careful in associating Dharma with religion and insisting that different religions are inherently as harmonious as different Dharmas. In fact different religions have inherent disharmonies that will require much time, study and communication to sort out. These have caused much of the misunderstanding that exists in the world, in which prayers to God have regularly accompanied the call to war and aggression.

Hindu votaries of Sarva Dharma Samabhāva often tell a Christian to be a better Christian or a Muslim to be a better Muslim, and would not encourage them to become Hindus, as if these religions contain the same teachings and have the same value as Hinduism. This they think is being liberal in religious matters and will aid everyone in their quest for God. However, it only consigns people to the limitations of their religious beliefs. A religion that does not recognize Self-realization, God-realization or have any Yogic sādhanā, such as most Western religions, cannot lead people to Moksha in the Hindu sense. If one wants to help a person find Moksha, which should be one's real Dharmic concern, it is better to tell them to follow what is true, to seek out the Dharma, even if it may require going against their religion as it is commonly understood to be.

Sarva Dharma Samabhāva has also been equated with the idea that *Truth is one but the paths are many*. There is indeed One Truth and many paths to it. However, this does not mean that all paths must lead to truth. There are paths that lead to falsehood and paths that lead only to partial truths. A path can only lead us as far as it goes. A religion that does not teach any experiential path to Self-realization cannot take us there. It can only take us to its idea of heaven or salvation that is its stated goal. Nor are the unity of Truth and monotheism, the idea that there is only one God, the same

teaching. Monotheism is often an exclusive formulation that divides humanity into the believers and the non-believers and refuses to accept truth that falls outside of the boundaries of its belief. The unity of Truth cannot limit itself to monotheism of a particular persuasion but must honor all spiritual aspiration whatever form it takes.

The correct term for the common Western idea of religion, which is a particular belief, in Hindu thought would not be Dharma but *mata* meaning a belief, view or opinion. There is no such possible statement as *Sarva Mata Samabhāva* or the equality and unity of all opinions. Opinions are as diverse as the minds of creatures. Nor need we seek to make all opinions one and the same. Diversity of opinions is necessary as part of freedom of seeking the truth.

Opinions are various and even contradictory. Some may be right, others may be wrong. They are speculative views that must be proved in practice. That fire burns is a Dharma. It is its natural quality. If some one has the opinion that fire does not burn we don't have to respect that idea in order to maintain the universality of all Dharmas. We should allow everyone to have his or her own opinion about religion, because the minds of living beings are unique and move in different paths, but we don't have to sanction all religious opinions as true in order to do this.

Religions as we know them from the Western world are largely belief systems which state that truth belongs to a particular person, group, holy book, or name of God and that those who do not share this belief are wrong or evil. I challenge any Christian or Islamic leaders to contradict this statement and say that Hinduism, Buddhism or other Dharmic traditions are as good as their religions and that therefore all efforts to convert followers of Dharmic religions are misguided and should be ended! If all religions follow the same Dharma let all religious leaders say that they accept the law of karma as valid and Self-realization as the real goal of life. Let a pope, bishop, mufti or mullah proclaim that one can find God without Jesus or Mohammed, the Bible or the Koran. If they are not saying such things, how can anyone, state that all religions are the same?

Belief-centered religions based upon time, place and person contain much that is not universal or valid. The exclusivism of their beliefs has historically led them to forceful efforts to convert others, which can be called adharmic. Hence religious exclusivism is the real bar on social harmony between religious groups. Making all religions the same has not ended this but, on the contrary, has allowed it to continue without question. It has placed exclusive beliefs on par with more tolerant traditions. While there is much adharmic about the social evils that have arisen in the context of the Hindu religion, there is no adharma in its core formulation that transcends time, place and person, and emphasizes the eternal over the historical element in religion. It does not require an exclusive formulation of truth but is open to diversity and multiplicity, in fact welcomes it.

Political Ramifications

Sarva Dharma Samabhāva has become a political principle in India - that in order to create social harmony we must honor all religions as the same, so that religious differences do not fuel social conflicts. Unfortunately the religious conflicts have continued. This is because pretending religions are the same, which is all that this principle is doing, does not address the real differences and misunderstandings between them.

Sarva Dharma Samabhāva has been used to court the favor of various religious groups and to uphold vote banks based upon religious belief. It is often a one-way street. Hindus are told to accept Sarva Dharma Samabhāva which means that they should not mind if Hindus are converted to Christianity and Islam and should avoid criticizing these religions even if what they believe appears to be a violation of what Hindus hold to be true. On the other hand, under the same principle, Muslims and Christians are not expected to reciprocate, stop their conversion efforts, or to become Hindus. The result is that Sarva Dharma Samabhāva has only served to erode the Hindu view of truth and encouraged Hindus to give up their critical faculties in matters of religion. It is contrary to the spirit of the Yogis and Rishis in which all manner of debate was encouraged in order to arrive at truth. Please note the Shad Darshanas, the six systems of Hindus philosophy, for such a tradition of free, lively, and friendly debate.

While we should all strive to be kind and respectful people and not interfere with the religious views of others, this does not mean that we have to cease thinking in order to do so. To create social harmony Hindus need not give up defending their religion or critically examining the religions that oppose them. The logical result of this thinking would mean that Hindus should give up their religion altogether. Yet whenever Hindus try to defend their religion, which is still under siege even in India, they are accused of violating the principle of Sarva Dharma Samabhāva. On the other hand, when other religious groups violate this principle, which is what all missionary conversion efforts are essentially doing, there is little criticism of them for doing so. When have Christians or Muslims in India ever been criticized for violating Sarva Dharma Samabhāva? Does this mean that they have never done so? If the principle of Sarva Dharma Samabhāva does not apply to them then why should we interpret it as meaning that all religions are the same?

Under the guise of religious tolerance this idea of equality of religions is used to prevent scrutiny of religious dogmas. Hindus are encouraged to accept the Bible or Koran as true like the Gita, for example, even without looking into what these books really say. Should Hindus look at other religions in a critical light, however intelligent, courteous or objective their views, they are called communal. Rather than uniting all religious groups, this principle of religious equality serves to sanction existing religions as they are. Aggressive religions are allowed to continue to be aggressive. Passive religions are expected not to try to defend themselves. Each religion is given sanctity for what it has historically done, and religions are given the freedom to act without question under the veil of belief.

What then is the alternative? What is the way of bringing understanding on the level of religion and social harmony between religious groups that often have very different, if not hostile beliefs? For this what is really needed is tolerance between religions, which requires that we respect diversity in the religious realm, not make all religions the same. Members of different religious communities must recognize that other religions may teach something very different about God, truth, salvation or liberation than they do. Rather than pretending these differences do not exist we should acknowledge them and allow people the freedom to examine them.

Equality of religions should not be confused with tolerance. We should tolerate all people, even if

they do not agree with us. Tolerance of differences creates harmony, not pretending that differences do not exist. In fact if we only tolerate people if we make them the same as we are, we are not really being tolerant at all. Similarly, members of other religions should learn to tolerate Hindus and respect the fact that Hindus do not always agree with them on matters of religion - that Hindus have their own spiritual and ethical views which other religious groups must consider as well. Should Hindus seek to redress the historical wrongs committed upon them by aggressive attempts to convert them, members of the religions involved should be willing to hear the Hindu point of view and honor it as they would their own grievances.

In a free society religious belief should be a personal matter. There should be no government enforced religious beliefs or dogmas. There should be political tolerance of all religious views as long as these do not involve violent or anti-national activities. On the political level it should not matter whether one believes in any religion at all, much less what religion a person may believe in. Political tolerance of all religious views, however, does not mean that individuals have to accept all religious views as right or good. In a free society one can be an atheist or agnostic or believe in any religion. Does this mean that we have to respect atheism as equally valid as religion in order to truly practice Sarva Dharma Samabhāva?

In Western democracies there is a growing recognition of a multi-faith and multi-cultural society. But there is no idea that all religions or all cultures are the same, that for example there is no difference between Christianity and Hinduism. Nor are religions, including Christianity, placed beyond question. In Islamic countries there is still the attempt to impose Islam upon everyone and little respect for other religions. In multi-faith dialogues throughout the world there is a recognition of certain commonalities in religion of moral goodness but a recognition of the many differences as well, particularly in regard to metaphysical beliefs. These differences are too significant to simply cover over. Hindus must recognize this fact as well and learn to act accordingly. Not the Equality of Religions but the Freedom of Inquiry. A truly free and tolerant social order should be based on respect for all people and respect for all life. This means respect for the individual and not imposing any collective or politically enforced idea of religious truth upon them. We should recognize our unity as human beings, even though our religions may have as many differences as they may have commonalities. The correct principle of a truly free society is not the equality of religions but freedom from domination by religious beliefs. This means that everyone should be free to follow or to question religion as they so chose. Religion is no more beyond question than any other aspect of human life. While a government should not criticize religions, it should not prevent their critical examination in society. In the modern world no one can pretend that their's is the only language or culture. True religion should be like science, a seeking of truth, not an attempt to impose a belief without any examination. This requires that we do not accept the boundaries of religion but open the field of religion, all religions, to deep examination. In this regard a new Hindu critique of religion is necessary to expand the religious views presented in the world today. A respectful but honest Hindu examination of other religions is essential to bring out a balance of views today.

What is necessary is a return to Dharma or universal truth principles, not respect for all religions as they exist today, which with their dogmas are often sordid affairs. One must seek to uphold Dharma even if all the organized religions of the world have to be discarded. It is time for religions

to bow down to Dharma, not for Dharma to be made in the image of religious beliefs and institutions.

Hinduism as a religion of Dharma rather than dogma should lead the way in this revolution, which also means clearing up the adharma that can be found among Hindus today. Unfortunately, the superficial universalism of the new Sarva Dharma Samabhāva is only serving to create a smoke-screen for adharmic religious beliefs and dogmas to perpetuate themselves.

One could draw an analogy. That justice is one does not mean that all governments are good whether they are democratic, fascist, or communist. It does not mean that one should not challenge oppression done under any existing government. Similarly, that spiritual truth is One does not mean that all religions are necessarily good and correct. Spiritual truth transcends organized religion, which mainly serves various political and social aims. Sarva Dharma Samabhāva means the harmony of Dharma or truth-principles, not the equality of religious beliefs, dogmas or institutions. Those who use the term otherwise are misusing it.

We are entering a new era in civilization today, in which religion must be radically recast, if not discarded. Only those religions willing to undergo a radical transformation are likely to survive. This change will be in the direction of experiential spirituality, in which the individual's direct experience of God or truth becomes the most important thing, and religious dogma and institutionalism is set aside. This is the real Sarva Dharma that no group can claim to own or dispense. One should not forget the Dharma in Sarva Dharma Samabhāva.

2. Meaning of Conversions

Suresh Desai

(Suresh Desai, writer and journalist, was invited to speak on his perceptions of the Christian Missionary activities at St. Pius Seminary at Goregaon, Mumbai, on 10th March 1997. The Seminary trains Christians in priesthood.

The audience was composed of 70 to 80 trainee priests, Father Julian who teaches at the college, a couple of lecturers and Mr. Arvind Singh from Hindu Vivek Kendra. Father Julian introduced Suresh Desai to the audience.)

Desai said in his speech:

Father Julian just said that it is a Christian practice to invite people of other religions and understand their views and perceptions. I am very happy about this practice because it fits in with the Hindu tradition of not only understanding the other people's views but also of appreciating, adapting and assimilating the best of them.

I thank Mr. Norbert DeSouza, National President of AICU and Father Julian for inviting me here to apprise you of my perceptions of the Missionary activities.

As you are aware I am a Hindu and I am very deeply interested in the Hindu tradition and civilization which is the oldest surviving civilization in the world. What appeals to me the most is that the content of Hindu thought is universal in nature and is not confined to or doesn't address itself to a particular geographical area or time or only to the people who are baptized in Hinduism or believe in the Hindu pantheon. I am not a religious person, do not indulge in any worship of any deity, do not believe in rituals, do not go to any temple and still I confess that I am a devout Hindu and am accepted as such by my Hindu milieu. My perceptions of missionary work are, therefore, inevitably influenced by my attachment to the Hindu culture.

I belong to Goa, where Christianity has a great deal of importance at the religious, cultural, political and social levels. It was here that the missionary activities gained momentum four centuries ago with the work of Francis Xavier and then Father Stevens. As students we freely mixed with our Christian friends whose ancestors were Hindus and were converted to Christianity only a few generations ago, In retrospect I find that this span of their being Christians had not at all improved their spirituality nor their socio-economic status. The improvement came in the wake of the freedom from the Portuguese rule in 1962. Many of them now have bungalow type houses, own cars, give Hindu names to their children and profess to not being much interested in religion.

In my mind, as in the mind of anybody who is conversant with the history of Europe, the missionary activities and Christianity are inseparably associated with inquisition, with intolerance of

science, with the fate of Galileo, Copernicus, Bruno, Joan of Arc, with burning of lakhs of women as witches, with crusades, and with thousands of victims in the Goa Inquisition. There is something like Heresy and heretics not only in Christianity but in other semitic religions like Islam, and if I may say so, the dogma of Marxism, beside the Book and the Prophet.

When you are working in the land of an ancient and dominant religion and try to preach the gospel of your faith and convert a large member of people who after conversion disown their cultural roots, it is inevitable and also justifiable that all your activities are viewed with suspicion and are attributed to one fundamental motive, that is, to convert people to your faith. Such cultural alienation in a country like India where nationalism is based on cultural and civilizational heritage, creates piquant situations such as those on the northeast frontiers. Ultimately, what is the objective of conversions? At the spiritual level, conversions from one religion to another are quite meaningless unless the motives are purely mundane.

Those who work with ulterior motives have to adjust, readjust and reorient their strategies according to the change in times which have been moving very fast during the last couple of decades. Strategies change but not the motive. The change of strategies is very often projected as basic change in the outlook, which is wrong. The basic change comes only with the reformulation of objectives. If the basic motive of the missionaries is still to bring Hindus to the fold of Christianity, no amount of change in strategies whether inculcation, acculturation or deculturation, will exonerate them in the eyes of their critics, despite liberal theology and acceptance of salvation through other religions but either in ecclesiocentric or Christocentric or theocentric manner. These terms are hair-splitting, pure and simple.

The inculcation is not a new concept. When Father Stevens wrote *KhristapurāNa* in Marathi 400 years ago in the style of Dnyaneshwar, he gave an excellent example of inculcation. The objective was to promote Christianity among natives.

The Hindu civilization is a movement of incredible continuities. In its march of over seven millennia it has taken in its stride innumerable vicissitudes, changes in the sources of livelihood, pastoralism, agriculture, and has entered the era of industrial development. Not all people have kept pace with the progress. Many of them are left behind either accidentally or of their own choice. So much so that pockets remained in the preagricultural, food gathering stages, and a large number of people remained agriculturist and a few urban areas have stepped into modernity. Nobody can readily say when it all started. The entire process is sanātana, without a definite beginning. I once again remind you that Hinduism is not a religion of the book in the semitic sense. Therefore, the Supreme Court has opined it is a comprehensive way of life.

The uneven development of this process has left some people in agriculture, pre-agricultural, pastoral, nomadic and even the stage before that. That is why the existence of tribal pockets. However, the underlying continuity of the process is such that they all belong to the same stream of Hinduism.

The British imperialists had other ideas. They wanted to sow the seeds of division, dissension and

separatism in the Hindu society to perpetuate their own rule. That's why the 1871 census described the tribals as animists. Animists means people who worship spirits and propitiate them. It is indeed very difficult to define where Hinduism ends and tribalism begins.

I give my own instance. I read Gita and the Upanishads. I am a devotee of Hindu thought, I am well acquainted with the idea of the Absolute. But when I go to my village, I see there my own cousins doing yoga for meditation in the morning and indulging in worshipping the spirits of the ancestors, the Kuladevata, the Gramadevata, the Vetala and the Cobra in the evening. Would you say that they are Hindu in the morning and animists in the evening? Some of them are extremely well-versed in the subtlest nuances of the philosophies of Hinduism. Even Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi have been organically imbedded in this what you may call animist past. Hinduism is a continuous process of evolution over the last thousands or perhaps lakhs of years. Some people moved up by the elevator, some people are coming up the ladder rung by rung. But they are the same people. Hinduism has developed from animism to the subtle and scintillating philosophies of the Gita and the Upanishadas.

Tribals are therefore unmistakably Hindus. There are many tribal Gods in the Hindu pantheon. Vithoba, Viroba, Giroba, Khandoba, Mhasoba, Satwai, Jokhai and many such Gods are still being worshipped. Hinduism doesn't reject anybody simply because he worships his own Gods. Gita specifically mentions that whatever deity a man may worship, whether it is Rama or Shiva or Govinda, if he does it with single-minded devotion, he ultimately reaches the Absolute.

One question which continues to plague my mind is: Why missionaries want to expand Christianity in numbers? There is no evidence that the conversion to Christianity has improved the world spiritually. However, Christianity has helped colonialism and imperialism. From what I learn from North-East States, I feel the aims of the missionaries are predominantly political. I would like to be proved wrong in my assessment. What happened in America in the wake of the assaults of Conquistadors like Cortez, Pizarro and Balboa and the Portuguese in Goa and the Goa Inquisition, reinforces my theory that their ulterior motive is political power and spirituality is used as means to achieve it. In Latin American countries, it is a well known fact that the Jesuits were involved in the game of power.

Today, Europe and America which were the bailiwicks of Christianity have spurned the religion in a large measure. I think missionaries and the churches should turn their efforts to first bring them back to Christianity, instead of spending their precious efforts on evangelising the tribals in India. Why are they not doing it?

At the same time, there are movements like New Religion Movement (NRM) which are weaning the Catholics away from the orthodoxy in favour of Pentecostal churches. Catholics also don't like their sheep straying to Protestant fold. I trust you have not forgotten their massacre in Paris on the day of St. Bartholomew. If Catholic missionaries don't like Catholics moving away from their fold, how do they expect Hindus to like their people being lured away to Christianity? Think over this in the context of the Pope saying during his visit to South America that he wanted to save Catholics from Protestant wolves.

Today, it is not the question of how many follow this religion or that. There is a pronounced current of thinking that religion has long outlived its utility. First, because of the capitalist orientation of the world, and secondly but equally important, because of the techno-scientific advance which tends to take man's thinking along empirical lines. Along with religion, ethical foundations also weaken. They are pooh-poohed as middle class morality. Communism and Fascism were the symptoms of this malaise. The disorientation from the traditional morality has caused tremendous frustration among mankind. You as priests should address yourselves to this dilemma and cease to think of conversions.

Finally, I once again bring to your notice that mankind is turning its back on God and that is the real problem. Conversions from one faith to another in this context are ridiculous. We should all make concerted efforts to see that citadels of moral restraints imposed by religion and faith in divinity are not shattered. As priests, a great deal of responsibility devolves on you in this respect.

This was followed by a Questions and Answers Session:

Q.: You say all religions are equal. Is there equality in Hinduism?

A.: I did not say all religions are equal. You are putting words in my mouth. There are hundreds of religions and cults in the world and they are at different stages of evolution.

Q.: You said there is equality in Hindu religion. What about caste system?

A.: Equality is a socio-economic and socio-political concept and relates to mundane matters. It is not relevant to an individual's efforts to identify himself with the Absolute. This can be done at the spiritual level only.

Caste system is purely a social phenomenon and is dependent on a particular system of production and distribution of the surplus. India was the first country to take to agricultural production which required a lot of manpower woven in an elaborate social network. Today, in modern cities where industrial production is predominant, caste system is considerably weaker than in villages where the plough and the bullock have a sway.

Q.: Are you sure caste system is not based on religion?

A.: Yes. I am sure and emphatically so. Castes and classes were there in all countries depending on the means of production and the distribution of surplus. In Rome, there were patricians plebeians and slaves. Was Christianity responsible for the slave system? French Revolution occurred because of the conflict of castes or classes and so did Russian and Chinese Revolution.

For the last more than hundred years Hindu social reformers have worked to demolish castes. They have not done this because there was sudden revelation in their mind but their awareness of the changes in social, economic and political contexts which spurred them to work against the caste system which was losing its relevance.

Would any of you show me a single reference where caste is associated with religion?

Q.: What about untouchability?

A.: Where is untouchability today? In our Constitution? In our legal system? The social evolution takes place over many centuries. At different stages, in the process, there may have developed social practices which appear ugly distortions today. The whole Hindu society is setting its face against such outmoded distortions.

Q.: Has Hindu religion given them equality?

A.: I repeat that equality is a social and not a religious concept. At the religious level, our galaxy of saints who realised God includes Mahars like Chokha Mela, a Chamar like Rohidas and many other saints from lowest depressed classes. Moksha is not withheld from anybody. Gita says that a sage views in the same light a Brahmin, a dog, a bull, an elephant and a pig. He treats them all as equals.

Q.: What is your idea concerning reservations for Christian dalits?

A.: Are there dalits among Christians? Impossible. You just said it is Hinduism and not Christianity which believes in castes. How come this shameful reference to the caste of Christian dalits? Christian dalits is a contradiction in terms.

Coming to reservations, are there such reservations in your own schools and autonomous institutions for Christian dalits? You invited these people to embrace Christianity with a promise that they would cease to be dalits after conversion. Now you are reimposing and perpetuating their dalithood.

We Hindus are aware that in the past, depending on the contexts of times, we have heaped injustices on dalits and reservations are a way to atone for these wrongs. What Christians have to atone for? Perhaps they also seem to have perpetrated similar treatment on their dalits all these years. Then why did you convert them? They would have enjoyed the reservations had they continued to be Hindu dalits.

Q.: You said God could be realised by Dnyana and also through Bhakti. Is Bhakti practised by people?

A.: Those people who are spiritually inclined practise Bhakti. I concede that just as among Christians those who are interested in salvation are microscopic few and among Muslims majority of people disregard Koranic injunctions and indulge in all sorts of pleasures - womanizing beyond the scriptural limit of four wives, booze, eat sausages and take Pathani interest on their lending. Among Hindus too followers of Charvaka might be in overwhelming majority. Man by nature is a licentious and lascivious creature and religion tries to keep his waywardness in check.

Those people who are capable of it among Hindus can straight go to Nirguna through Dnyana or Hathayoga like Dnyaneshwar. The devotees who are not capable of it, do it through Bhakti. Dnyaneshwar's friend and disciple Namdeo, was a Bhaktimargi and there were friendly arguments between them about the superiority of Dnyana over Bhakti or vice-versa. A story has it that once they together were on an all India tour and in the thick of summer came to the Rajasthan desert. No water was seen around to quench their thirst. With parched mouths they discerned a distant well

and rushed to it. The well was very deep and water lay at the bottom. How to get it? Dnyaneshwar looked at Namdeo with an air of achievement and said, "Namdeva, now you see the power of Yoga." By his yogic powers, Dnyaneshwar took the form of a tiny ant and went down the well along its wall, had a mouthful of water and came up. Namdeo said, "Dnyanoba, now you see the power of Bhakti." He took his cymbals in hand and to their rhythm started singing *Vithal, Vithal*. As the recitation reached its crescendo, water at the bottom of the well flushed up and he quenched his thirst. "That is the power of Bhakti," he said.

Now this might be an apocryphal story, but it makes a point. Bhakti is as effective as Dnyana or Yoga, if not more. Adi Shankaracharya was an Advaitin but subsequent philosophers, Madhva and Ramanuja, were Dvaitins or Vishistadvaitins. They conceded that God could be realised by Bhakti.

Unfortunately, very few people today are anxious to realise God and, the world over, they have become worshippers of mammon.

Q.: You have spoken against conversions. What about Christians being reconverted to Hinduism?

A.: If somebody wants to return home to his ancient religion, it is definitely not conversion. Let him come back like the Prodigal Son (laughter).

Q.: Why are you against conversions?

A.: Why are you for conversions? What is your objective in converting the people to your faith and expand it numerically? I can understand qualitative improvement of a religion, say from Saguna to Nirguna or from Animism to Bhakti. Religion means an individual's craving and efforts to realise God. He may do it in the way he thinks is most suitable for him. That's what Hinduism teaches - *Sarva Deva Namaskara Kesharam Pratigachhati*. It is immaterial whether you worship Jesus or Mohammed as your worship ultimately reaches the Absolute, what we call Brahman.

Semitic religions, however, whether it is Islam, Christianity or dogma of Marxism, thirst for quantitative expansion, simply because they hanker after political power - a materialistic, mundane objective - and want to exploit religion for the purpose. That's why missionary activities blossomed in America under the patronage of Spanish Conquistadors and in India it sanctified the colonialism of the British and the Portuguese. When I rack my brains about what is the fundamental objective of conversions, I get the resounding reply, *Imperialism*.

That's what made Francis Xavier write that every time a new convert smashes his idols and destroys his temples where he worshipped just before conversion, his joy knows no bounds. And such a man is called a saint! If our Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram had written a similar thing, we would have called them criminals.

Q.: Do you think it is possible for you to settle your problems with Muslims through a dialogue with them?

A.: That will depend on the attitude of Muslims. Hinduism has reached understanding with Scythians, Huns, Parthians, Greeks, Parsees and Jews and has had no problem with them. But

Muslims are different. Their religion is highly imperialistic. That is why it came into this world in 622 A.D. and by 732 A.D. it had reached India, outer walls of China, and overrun Europe. Had Charles Martel not defeated them at the Battle of Tours, the entire Europe would have been Muslim today.

The civilization and culture of this country existed many thousands of years before the advent of Islam in the world and Muslims in this country have to take cognizance of it and be proud of the ancient cultural and civilisational traditions of this country. You may not worship Rama and Krishna as religious figures and I myself do not give them religious importance. But they were among the architects of the civilization and the ethos of this land. Muslims or Christians in this country have to identify their cultural roots with their messages and the message of Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Upanishadas. If Muslims sincerely do it, there won't be any problems.

Q.: If Bhakti can lead to Moksha, why Hindu people go to pilgrimage?

A.: As I have said earlier, people perceive God according to their comprehensitional capacity. Although majority of mankind is irreligious and materially oriented, paying cosmetic loyalty to religion is also part of life, like going to Church on Sunday. If people get happiness through it, let them have it. All men can't be *Paramahansas*.

Q.: You said the problem is to check decline into irreligiosity and crass materialism. How can we do it?

A.: I am not competent to give you guidance. I have made a suggestion and leaders of thought and spirituality and learned people all over the world should sit together and find a way out. Terrorism, violence, obscenity, moral chaos - all are offshoots of decline of spirituality. You are going to be priests and you should do something about it. Bringing some Hindus to Christianity or taking Christians to Islam is puerile and meaningless in the context of the bigger problem of promoting spiritual inclination among the entire mankind.

The First Victims of Islam

1. Roll Over, Rushdie - Daniel Pipes⁷⁵

In March 1989, shortly after Ayatollah Khomeini issued his decree sentencing Salman Rushdie to death for his novel *The Satanic Verses*, London's Observer newspaper published an anonymous letter from Pakistan. "Salman Rushdie speaks for me", wrote its author, who explained: "Mine is a voice that has not yet found expression in newspaper columns. It is the voice of those who are born Muslims but wish to recant in adulthood, yet are not permitted to on pain of death. Someone who does not live in an Islamic society cannot imagine the sanctions, both self-imposed and external, that militate against expressing religious disbelief. I don't believe in God' is an impossible public utterance even among family and friends. So we hold our tongues, those of us who doubt."

Ibn Warraq has decided no longer to hold his tongue. Identified only as a man who grew up in a country now called an Islamic republic, presently living and teaching in Ohio, the Khomeini decree so outraged him that he wrote a book called *Why I Am Not A Muslim* (Prometheus Books, 402 pages, \$25.95) that transcends *The Satanic Verses* in terms of sacrilege. Where Rushdie offered an elusive critique in an airy tale of magical realism, Ibn Warraq brings a scholarly sledge-hammer to the task of demolishing Islam. Writing a polemic against Islam, especially for an author of Muslim birth, is an act so incendiary that the author must write under a pseudonym; not to do so would be an act of suicide.

And what does Ibn Warraq have to show for this act of unheard-of defiance? A well-researched and quite brilliant, if somewhat disorganized, indictment of one of the world's great religions. While the author disclaims any pretence to originality, he has read widely enough to write an essay that offers a startlingly novel rendering of the faith he left.

To begin with, Ibn Warraq draws on current Western scholarship to make the astonishing claim that Muhammad never existed, or if he did, he had nothing to do with the Koran. Rather, that holy book was fabricated a century or two later in, Palestine, *then projected back onto an invented Arabian point of origin*. If the Koran is a fraud, it's not surprising to learn that the author finds little authentic in other parts of the Islamic tradition. For example, he dispatches Islamic law as *a fantastic creation founded on forgeries and pious fictions*. The whole of Islam, in short, he portrays as a concoction of lies.

Having thus dispensed with religion, Ibn Warraq takes up history and culture. Turning political correctness exactly on its head, he condemns the early Islamic conquests and condones European colonialism, "*Bowing toward Arabia five times a day*", he writes, "*must surely be the ultimate symbol of cultural imperialism.*" In contrast, European rule, "*with all its shortcomings, ultimately benefited the ruled as much as the rulers. Despite certain infamous incidents, the European powers conducted themselves on the whole very humanely.*"

To the conventional argument that the achievements of Islamic civilization in the medieval period are proof of Islam's greatness, Ibn Warraq revives the Victorian argument that Islamic civilization came into existence not because of the Koran and Islamic law but despite them. The stimulus in

⁷⁵ Daniel Pipes, a Professor at Harvard University, U.S.A., is one of the world's foremost historians. He is editor of the Middle East Quarterly and author of *The Rushdie Affair: The Novel, the Ayatollah, and the West*. This review by him was published in The Weekly Standard of New York, U.S.A., on January 22, 1996.

science and the arts came from outside the Muslim world; where Islam reigned, these accomplishments took place only where the dead hand of Islamic authority could be avoided. Crediting Islam for the medieval cultural glories, he believes, would be like crediting the Inquisition for Galileo's discoveries.

Turning to the present, Ibn Warraq argues that Muslims have experienced great travails trying to modernize because Islam stands foursquare in their way. Its regressive orientation makes change difficult: "*All innovations are discouraged in Islam - every problem is seen as a religious problem rather than a social or economic one. This religion would seem to have nothing functional to offer. Islam, in particular political Islam, has totally failed to cope with the modern world and all its attendant problems - social, economic, and philosophical*". Nor does the author hold out hope for improvement. Take the matter of protecting individuals from the state: "*The major obstacle in Islam to any move toward international human rights is God, or to put it more precisely, the reverence for the sources, the Koran and the Sunnah.*"

In a chapter of particular delicacy, given his status as a Muslim living in the West, Ibn Warraq discusses Muslim emigration to Europe and North America. He worries about the importation of Islamic ways and advises the British not to make concessions to immigrant demands but to stick firmly by their traditional principles. *Unless great vigilance is exercised, we are all likely to find British society greatly impoverished morally by Muslim influence.* At the same time, as befits a liberal and Western-oriented Muslim, Ibn Warraq argues that the key dividing line is one of personal philosophy and not (as Samuel Huntington would have it) religious adherence. *[T]he final battle will not necessarily be between Islam and the West, but between those who value freedom and those who do not.* This argument in fact offers hope, implying as it does that peoples of divergent faiths can find common ground.

As a whole, Ibn Warraq's assessment of Islam is exceptionally severe: The religion is based on deception; it succeeded through aggression and intimidation; it holds back progress; and it is a **form of totalitarianism**. Surveying nearly fourteen centuries of history, he concludes, "the effects of the teachings of the Koran have been a disaster for human reason and social, intellectual, and moral progress."

As if this were not enough, Ibn Warraq tops off his blasphemy with an assault on what he calls *monotheistic arrogance* and even religion as such. He asks some interesting questions, the sort that we in the West seem not to ask each other any more, "If there is a natural evolution from polytheism to monotheism, then is there not a natural development from monotheism to atheism?" Instead of God appearing in obscure places and murky circumstance, "why can He not reveal Himself to the masses in a football stadium during the final of the World Cup?" In 1917, rather than permit a miracle in Fatima, Portugal, why did He not end the carnage on the Western Front?

It is hard for a non-Muslim fully to appreciate the offense Ibn Warraq has committed, for his book of deep protest and astonishing provocation goes beyond anything imaginable in our rough-and-tumble culture. We have no pieties remotely comparable to Islam's. In the religious realm, for example, Joseph Heller turned several Biblical stories into pornographic fare in his 1984 novel *God Knows*, and no one even noticed. For his portrayal of Jesus' sexual longings in the 1988 film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, Martin Scorsese faced a few pickets but certainly no threats to his life. In the political arena, Charles Murray and Dinesh D'Souza published books on the very most delicate American topic, the issue of differing racial abilities, and neither had to go into hiding as a result.

In contrast, blasphemy against Islam leads not only to threats on the life of Salman Rushdie, but to actual murder - and not just in places like Egypt and Bangladesh. At least one such execution has taken place on American soil. Rashad Khalifa, an Egyptian biochemist living in Tucson, Arizona,

analyzed the Koran by computer and concluded from some other complex numerology that the final two verses of the ninth chapter do not belong in the holy book. This insight eventually prompted him to declare himself a prophet, a very serious offense in Islam (which holds Muhammad to be the last of the prophets). Some months later, on January 31, 1990, unknown assailants - presumably orthodox Muslims angered by his teachings - stabbed Khalifa to death. While the case remains unsolved, it sent a clear and chilling message: Even in the United States, deviancy leads to death.

In this context, Ibn Warraq's claim of the right to disagree with Islamic tenets is a shock. And all the more so when he claims even the Westerner's right to do so disrespectfully! *This book is first and foremost an assertion of my right to criticize everything and anything in Islam - even to blaspheme, to make errors, to satirize, and mock.* **Why I am Not a Muslim** does have a mocking quality, to be sure, but it is also a serious and thought-provoking book. It calls not for a wall of silence, much less a Rushdie-like fatwa on the author's life, but for an equally compelling response from a believing Muslim.

2. Standing Up to Scrutinize Islam - G.A. Wells⁷⁶

Why I Am Not a Muslim, By Ibn Warraq (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1995) 402 pp., \$25.95 cloth.

Why I Am Not a Muslim certainly deserves the epithet *courageous* with which R. J. Hoffmann introduces it in his Foreword, not so much because of its thesis that Islamic civilization often reached magnificent heights despite the religion of Islam, as because almost all the fundamental tents of Islam are here scrutinized uncompromisingly. Moreover, Ibn Warraq's criticisms are no idiosyncrasies, but supported with very extensive references to scholarly works. His book is particularly valuable as a means of acquainting oneself with this scholarship.

Not surprisingly, he devotes a chapter to the inferior position of women in Islam, and another to the undemocratic pressures applied by Islamic immigrants in the West today. He is appalled by the willingness of British authorities to allow incitement to murder a British citizen (Salman Rushdie) from a public platform in Britain; and he finds the French authorities refreshingly less permissive on such matters.

Warraq begins by showing how often politeness to less-civilized countries has been a whip with which to lash the shortcomings of one's own society. It was on this basis that Tacitus boasted the Germans and that eighteenth-century Europeans looked up to *the noble savage*. In the present century, European malaise about colonialism and imperialism has prompted belief in the superior virtue of subject nations. Attitudes to Islam and to its history have been affected by such sentiments, although there have of course been dissenting voices. (Schopenhauer declared, in an essay on man's metaphysical needs, that he could not find a single valuable idea in the whole of the Koran.) The uncompromising monotheism of Islam has been particularly admired. It is true that Christianity is monotheistic only in virtue of an unintelligible fiction (the Trinity), and the Judaism's allegiance to one god was not the same as belief in only one god. But Ibn Warraq reminds us that monotheism can readily join with exclusive intolerance.

The religion of one day is largely a reshuffling of ideas of a yesterday, and to this Islam is no exception. It has taken a great deal from both Jewish and Christian traditions, but I doubt whether many Christians are aware of in what strange guise Christianity figures in the Koran. According to Sura 4, Jesus was not crucified: *the Jews Killed him not, they did not crucify him, but it was made to appear that way to them*. This strikes at the heart of what is now established as Christian doctrine. If there was no atoning death, there is no redemption, through such a death. But this was the kind of Christian teaching that reached Muhammad; for a number of second-century Christians had regarded suffering, which implies change and imperfection, as foreign to the divine nature. As our author says, *what is in the Koran about Christianity derives from heretical sects* (p. 62).

Something else made clear in this book that will probably surprise many is how much of what has long passed for the early history of Islam has been put in question by serious scholars. I had always

⁷⁶ This review appeared in FREE INQUIRY, Winter 1995/96. The reviewer is a Professor at the University of London, a member of the Academy of Humanism, and the author of *Did Jesus Exist?*

believed that the swift rise of Muhammad's religion to power - overrunning the whole of Arabia in his lifetime and defeating Christian armies in Syria soon after his death - meant that the evidence for its origin will have been critically sifted at a far-earlier stage than could have occurred in the case of Christianity, which long remained a jumble of insignificant sects and took three hundred years to attain state recognition. Also, the Koran looks much more authentic than the Gospels, in that its author works no miracles and makes no claim to divinity. Only in later traditions do his features become implausibly magnified. Ibn Warraq's chapter on *The Problem of the Sources* must give us pause here. There is not only disparate material in the Koran, but also repetition of whole passages in variant versions; and this looks more like belated and imperfect editing of materials from a plurality of traditions than a collection of a single author's sayings. Also, there are so many variant readings that it is misleading to speak of the Koran: *The definitive text still had not been achieved as late as the ninth century* (p. 154). As with the New Testament, the faithful are familiar with a uniform text and know little or nothing of the variants given in any apparatus criticus. (To take but one New Testament example, whether Luke has a doctrine of atonement depends on which manuscripts of his account of the Last Supper are to be taken as giving the original reading.)

As for the Koran's contradictions, some are quite normal in a single, individual religious writer and need not be put down to multiple authorship. An instance is the alternation between predestination passages (*God misleads whom He will, and whom He will he guides*) and others that give mankind some kind of free will. If what happens has been predetermined, it is futile to urge people to change their ways. Yet Muhammad and his followers have always done this, as did St. Paul, who combined the idea that God blinds people with the doctrine that their errors are all *their own* fault. Similarly, Marxists believe that persons in a certain economic condition will inevitably behave in a certain way, but nevertheless abuse them for doing so.

Another striking contradiction quite normal in religious writing is that the God of the Koran is merciful and compassionate, yet consigns those who do not believe in him to everlasting torment. Our author notes that *Muhammad really lets his otherwise limited imagination go wild when describing, in revolting detail, the torments of hell* (p. 125).

Muslim commentators deal with some of the contradictions by claiming that latter verses in the Koran may cancel earlier ones. What is early or late is, however, largely conjecture, as the Suras are arranged in order of length, not chronologically.

The biographies of the prophet have always been known to be relatively late; and the traditions about the early history of Islam grow, in characteristic legendary fashion, from one writer to the next: "*If one storyteller should happen to mention a raid, the next one would tell its exact date, and the third one would furnish even more details*" (p. 84). Ibn Warraq sums this up with: either we conclude with a number of recent scholars that we do not know a great deal about Muhammad, or we make do with the traditional sources. He adds: "*Muslims would perhaps be better off accepting the former alternative*, since the picture that emerges of the Prophet from the latter is *not at all flattering*. Furthermore, Muslims cannot complain that this is a portrait drawn by an enemy (p. 86).

There are of course morally acceptable teachings in the Koran, but there is also much intolerance. One of its worst legacies is the notion of a Holy War, developed *with the help of the idea of rewards in paradise for the holy martyrs who died fighting for Islam* (p. 156). Ibn Warraq deplores the fact that, although imperialism is now discredited, *hardly anyone bothers to criticize the Islamic variety that resulted in such death and destruction* (p. 346). Bernard Lewis, an Islamic scholar whom our author rightly treats with respect, has argued that, there were indeed *exaltation and dogmatism on both sides*, yet *greater tolerance on the Turkish*. Spanish Jews after the Inquisition found refuge in Turkey, and *when Ottoman rule in*

Europe came to an end, the Christian nations they had ruled for centuries were still there, with their languages, their cultures, their religions, even to some extent their institutions, intact, whereas there are no Muslims today in Spain or Sicily and no speakers of Arabic (See Lewis's chapter in the symposium *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford University Press, 1974). Ibn Warraq finds this stress on Islamic pluralism and tolerance quite misplaced: Turkey was *no inter-faith utopia* (p. 187). He emphasizes atrocities (including recent ones) in Muslim history as a counter to sentimental nonsense about the **spiritual East**, which, we are constantly told, is so much superior to the decadent and atheistic West (p. 161).

Islam certainly keeps a firm grip on its people by making apostasy a capital offense, as is also blasphemy towards God and the Prophet. "*In modern times blasphemy has simply become a tool for Muslim governments to silence opposition, or for individuals to settle personal scores*" (p. 176). It is of course quite generally the case that religions that inculcate obedience and submission to established authority tend to be supported by established governments. Bernard Lewis himself has noted, in a recent essay, how Khomeini dealt with groups and individuals opposing the Islamic revolution: for him, insistence on open trials, defense lawyers, and proper procedures was no more than a reflection of the *Western sickness among us*. Those on trial, he insisted, were criminals, and criminals should be executed, not tried. Warraq notes that it was this hatred and loathing of the West that led Arab countries to sympathize in the Gulf War even with Saddam Hussein: he is a tyrant, but he *stood up to the West*.

When Warraq speaks of science, he allows that it is in this domain that *we come at last to the true greatness of Islamic civilization* (p. 272). I have recently come across an illustration of this in the 1984 Princeton University Press edition of Galen: On Respiration and the Arteries by British scholars David J. Furley and J. S. Wilkie, who offer a greatly improved Greek text by utilizing an Arab translation better than any of the surviving Greek manuscripts. But Warraq argues that it was despite Islam that Islamic science developed. He quotes Ernest Renan's verdict:

To give Islam the credit of Averroes and so many other illustrious thinkers, who passed half their life in prison, in forced hiding, in disgrace, whose books were burned and whose writings almost suppressed by theological authority, is as if one were to ascribe to the Inquisition the discoveries of Galileo, and a whole scientific development which it was not able to prevent.

The older scholars on whom Warraq draws include D. S. Margoliouth, whose **Mohammedanism** in the series Home University Library of Modern Knowledge is still a useful introduction. Warraq's recent authorities include of course Bernard Lewis, and also W. Montgomery Watt, whom he calls *by common consent the greatest and one of the most influential living Islamic scholars in Britain*. Like Warraq, I have found Watt informative, yet infuriating, in that he repeatedly recast traditional doctrines - Christian as well as Muslim - into impressive-sounding formulas that are really no more than solemn-faced nonsense. For instance, his version of *O Lamb of god that takes away the sins of the world* is that *Jesus was deliberately living out an archetypal synthesis*. The then Bishop of Edinburgh quoted this in his Foreword to Watt's 1959 book (pretentiously entitled *The Cure of Human Troubles*) and opined that it may be *difficult to think and express ourselves in these new terms*. There is in fact no difficulty at all in thus *expressing ourselves*. Whether we are thereby thinking of anything other than the words is another matter.

One truth that Warraq's book brings home very forcibly is that religion has so often been made the basis for perpetuating social injustices. Napoleon was but voicing an almost universal attitude when he saw in Christianity *not the mystery of the Incarnation, but the mystery of social order*, in that inequality of property can be maintained only by convincing the poor that it is God's will and that they will be better off in kingdom-come. Warraq allows that it may well be inhuman to tell an individual who is

suffering irredeemably that his belief in God and in an after-life when all will be righted is sheer delusion; but he sees that the systematic inculcation of highly suspect doctrine is quite another matter, and certainly not to be made an excuse for storing nothing to ameliorate man's lot (p. 162). He remains “*convinced that despite all the shortcomings of Western liberal democracy, it is far preferable to the authoritarian, mind-numbing certitudes of Islamic theocracy*” (p. 359).

Scriptures and creeds make a religion vulnerable, in that they supply the critic and the skeptic with a hold. Nevertheless, many Christians have managed to transcend elements in their sacred books that have been impugned. Can we not expect the same of Muslims? Liberal Christians will say, for instance, that God's revelation is presented in the Bible through miracle stories because miracles were believed in at that time, whereas we who do not believe in them are free to interpret the miracle stories in a different way. Can we not expect Muslims to say, sooner or later, that persecution of *infidels* is enjoined in the Koran because in Islam's early days only an aggressive attitude to outsiders ensured its survival, whereas modern believers can be open to divine counsel of moderation and tolerance? A serious obstacle to any such development is the hatred of the West that Muslim leaders inculcate. Leaders get the support of followers by persuading them that they are threatened by a common enemy. Their argument is not “*Support me, because I wish for power,*” but “*Support me to save yourselves from these hated imperialists.*” Without such a basis of hatred, the support for a leader is apt to become lukewarm; and so he must be continually striking at the supposed enemy. This it is that militates so strongly against any compromise. Altogether, in political argument even in democracies, it is the appeal to moral principles that gives rise to most of the hate, and it would be much better to talk frankly about interests. One who resists a moral principle must necessarily be immoral, and therefore not to be argued with but coerced. On the other hand, when an opposition of interests is frankly faced, there is a possibility of reaching some kind of compromise and understanding, without abuse and anger.

Warraq's book shows that the world today is very far from such a situation and is not moving towards it.

3. Turning away from Mecca - Antony Flew⁷⁷

Why I am not a Muslim, Ibn Warraq, Prometheus Books,

Buffalo, 1995 \$25.99. (UK Agent 10 Crescent View, Loughton, IG10 4PZ).

This book was written by a man who was raised in a totally Muslim environment in an overwhelmingly Muslim country. But he has since moved to one of the NATO states which have since World War II been accepting mass immigrations from such countries. *Why I am not a Muslim* is apparently the first book of its kind to have appeared in the English language.

Ibn Warraq arranges his abundant materials on no obvious principles. He begins with a chapter entitled *The Rushdie Affair*, which deals mainly with the maltreatment of dissidents within the Islamic world and the failure of so many Western Islamicists to adopt a properly critical approach to their subject. This is followed by four chapters on *The Origins of Islam*, *The Problems of Sources*, *Muhammad and His Message* and *The Koran*. Then, when we might have expected to go on to the development of the Hadith and the Sharia, we have instead two chapters on *The Totalitarian Nature of Islam* and *Is Islam Compatible With Democracy and Human Rights?* After that we have seven chapters on such various Islamic topics as *Sufism or Islamic Mysticism* and *Taboos: Wine, Pigs and Homosexuality* before reaching a *Final Assessment of Muhammad* and a final chapter on *Islam in the West*.

The pseudonymous author makes no pretensions to being himself a professional Islamicist. But all his materials about the doctrines and history of Islam are drawn from the works of Western scholars and so - as I am assured by one of them - we can take the book to be factually reliable. It does, therefore constitute an invaluable compilation. Unlike professional Islamicists who are alive and working today, this author is not afflicted with inhibitions from offending either Muslim friends or Muslim regimes.

Although he does make the crucial point that all true Muslims are as such fundamentalists, and that this term should not be applied only to the Ayatollah Khomeini and his like (p. 11) he does not either make it adequately or insist upon it consistently. The term *fundamentalist*, which was coined in 1920, derives from the title of a series of tracts - *The Fundamentals* - published in the United States from 1910 to 1915. It has since been implicitly defined as meaning a person who believes that, since *The Bible* is the *Word of God*, every proposition in it must be true; a belief which, notoriously, is taken to commit fundamentalist Christians to defending the historicity of the accounts of the creation of the Universe given in the first two chapters of *Genesis*.

On this understanding a fully believing Christian does not have to be fundamentalist. Instead it is both necessary and sufficient to accept the Apostles' and/or *The Nicene Creed*. In Islam, however, the situation is altogether different. For, whereas only a very small proportion of all the propositions contained in the Old and New Testaments are presented as statements made directly by God in any of the three persons of the Trinity, The Koran consists entirely and exclusively of what are alleged to be revelations from Allah (God). Therefore, with regard to The Koran, all Muslims must be as such fundamentalists; and anyone denying anything asserted in The Koran ceases, ipso facto, to be

⁷⁷ This review was published in *The Salisbury Review*, Spring 1996. The quarterly is published from London.

properly accounted a Muslim. Those whom the media call fundamentalists would therefore better be described as revivalists.

This conceptual truth not only places a tight limitation upon the possibilities of developmental change within Islam, as opposed to the tacit or open abandonment of one or more of its original particular claims, but also opens up the theoretical possibility of falsifying the Islamic system as a whole by presenting some known fact which is inconsistent with a Koranic assertion. Unfortunately Ibn Warraq fails to emphasize this point and to bring out its implications consistently. Thus, even on the page immediately following that on which he argues that all true Muslims must be fundamentalists, he goes on to argue that, because *the vast majority of victims of Holy Terror are inhabitants of Islamic states, therefore Islam is a threat to thousands of Muslims* (p. 12: emphasis original).⁷⁸

Why I am not a Muslim gives readers abundant excellent reasons for not becoming or remaining Muslims and also makes a compelling case for the conclusion that Islam is flatly incompatible with the establishment and maintenance of the equal individual rights and liberties of a liberal, democratic, secular state. It thus provides further support for Mervyn Hiskett's more particular contentions about the threat to British traditions and values arising from our rapidly growing Muslim minority.

To his suggestions as to how an administration with vision, backbone and truly conservative principles might counter this threat - by, for instance, insisting that the criminal law must be applied equally to all, *including Muslims and non-whites inciting to murder* - we can now add another. For this threat might be slightly reduced if some individual were to write a much shorter, persuasive book deploying all the good reasons for not becoming or remaining a Muslim.

Attempts to get the present book into public libraries would also be worthwhile. They would force the opposition to choose between allowing it to become more widely accessible and providing evidence of the reality of the Islamic threat to freedom of expression.

⁷⁸ The reviewer has not presented Ibn Warraq correctly. The sentences he quotes from p. 12 relate not to fundamentalism but to a book, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, by the American Islamicist John Esposito. The book, Ibn Warraq says, is "based on the same dishonesty as soft-core pornography". What Esposito and all Western apologists of Islam are incapable of understanding is that Islam is a threat to thousands of *Muslims*. As Amir Taheri puts it, "the vast majority of victims of **Holy Terror** are *Muslims*". Here the word *Muslims* has a double meaning, namely, that all believing Muslims being fundamentalists, they threaten with death the *Muslims* who try to dissent. The implication is that if believing Muslims were not fundamentalists, many born *Muslims* may choose to dissent.

4. Islam is religious fascism - Ibn Al-Rawandi⁷⁹

Why I am not a Muslim by Ibn Warraq
(Prometheus Books, £15 to RPA members).

In one of his early works the traditionalist writer Frithjof Schuon makes an acute observation about the mentality of Muslims: “The intellectual - and thereby the rational - foundation of Islam results in the average Muslim having a curious tendency to believe that non-Muslims either know that Islam is the truth and reject it out of pure obstinacy, or else are simply ignorant of it and can be converted by elementary explanations; that anyone should be able to oppose Islam with a good conscience quite exceeds the Muslim’s power of imagination, precisely because Islam coincides in his mind with the irresistible logic of things.” (*Stations of Wisdom*) How true this is will strike anyone who has tried to have a rational discussion on religion with a Muslim born of Muslim parents and raised in a Muslim culture.

However, that this situation does admit exceptions is proved by the author of the book under review. Ibn Warraq was born into a Muslim family and grew up in a country that now describes itself as an Islamic republic. His earliest memories are of his circumcision and first day at Quran school, and his family still consider themselves Muslims. He, however, now considers himself a secular humanist who believes that: “all religions are sick men’s dreams, false - demonstrably false - and pernicious.”

Given such views, arrived at against such odds and expressed at such risk, the pusillanimous attitude of many Western intellectuals to the Rushdie affair is observed with scorn:

The most infuriating and nauseating aspect of the Rushdie affair was the spate of articles and books written by Western apologists for Islam - journalists, scholars, fellow travellers, converts (some from communism) - who claimed to be speaking for Muslims. This is surely condescension of the worst kind, and it is untrue. Many courageous individuals from the Muslim world supported and continue to support Rushdie.

For Ibn Warraq support for Rushdie has to be seen as part of a larger war against the rise of fundamentalist Islam:

For those who regret not being alive in the 1930s to be able to show their commitment to a cause, there is, first, the Rushdie affair, and, second, the war that is taking place in Algeria, the Sudan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, a war whose principal victims are Muslims, Muslim women, Muslim intellectuals, writers, ordinary decent people. This book is my war effort.

Considering the number of Muslims now resident in Western countries this is a war toward which no one, who values critical thought, free speech and democracy, can afford to be indifferent.

This is not a matter of *the demonisation of Islam*, but of simply and honestly looking facts in the face,

⁷⁹ This review appeared in the NEW Humanist. The place and date of publication is not mentioned on the photocopy received by us. Nor does the photocopy give the full name or any other information about the reviewer.

something that Muslims and their supporters are notoriously incapable of doing. It can be predicted now that the main response of the Muslim community to this book will be to shout *Apostate*, accuse the author of every kind of moral degeneracy, and leave the facts and arguments he adduces completely unaddressed.

Those facts and arguments concern the wholly human origin of the Quran, the moral and intellectual inadequacies of Muhammad, the wholly tendentious and invented character of the *hadith*, the sexually-obsessed and anti-feminine nature of the *sharia*, the Arab empire spread by the sword and maintained by terror, the persecution of religious and intellectual minorities in that empire in the name of Islam, the incapacity of Muslims for any kind of critical or self-critical thought, and the abject intellectual and moral poverty of Islam vis-à-vis the modern secular West.

The amazing thing is that it has taken so long for such a book to appear and that it has been left to a non-Westerner to write it, since the material for its assembly has been around for anything up to a century. The mealy-mouthed and apologetic character of so much Western scholarship on Islam springs from the fact that many of these scholars were, and are, believers, albeit in the rival creed of Christianity. While they might be willing to show Muhammad in a poor light compared to Jesus, they were not keen to press the non-historical and non-divine arguments too far, since they realised that such arguments could just as well be used against their own cherished beliefs. They preferred a complicity of intellectual dishonesty with the Muslims in the face of an increasingly sceptical and secular environment.

Perhaps the most important thing demonstrated by Ibn Warraq is that Islam is fundamentalist by nature, and not by some peculiar and aberrant recent development. All Muslims, not just the fanatics, believe that every word of the Quran is quite literally the word of God, absolutely and unquestionably true for all times, places, and people, and practically the same goes for the *hadith* and the *sharia*. Anyone who wishes to argue that the fanatics' interpretation of these elements is wrong and that a far more *liberal* interpretation can be made and that is the real Islam, have really only their own tastes and inclinations to support them. There is no Pope in Islam, nor any Councils with authority to impose a creed. The fanatic who thinks that all unbelievers should be killed has just as much authority as the Sufi who thinks that all religions are true and that even atheists go to heaven. Both parties could adduce Quranic texts and hadith to support their positions, and both would be drawing, in their own minds, upon the immutable word of god. As Ibn Warraq observes: "Even if we concede that Muslim conservatives have interpreted the sharia in their own way, what gives us the right to say that their interpretation is the inauthentic one and that of the liberal Muslim's, authentic? Who is going to decide what is authentic Islam?"

With regard to so-called liberal Islam this manifests in the West chiefly in the form of *Sufism or Islamic Mysticism*, the title of Chapter 12. Unfortunately, this is the shortest chapter in the book, a mere six pages, and has the appearance of an afterthought, since Sufism is only really dealt with in the first two pages and there inadequately. This is unfortunate because Sufism has been taken up by many Western intellectuals for whom real Islam is Sufism, and real Sufism is the Sufism of Ibn Arabi. This is in fact a ludicrous position, since it amounts to saying that real Islam is a minority view within a minority view, a view, moreover, that for most of the history of Islam has been suspected of heresy. What is needed with regard to Sufism is an in-depth critique of the metaphysics of Ibn Arabi as expounded in the works of such contemporary scholars as William Chittick and Michel Chodkiewicz, together with a sociological survey of the circus that surrounds such contemporary Sufis as Sheikh Nazim al-Qubrusi; but that would amount to another book.

Another important achievement of Ibn Warraq is that he explodes the myth of Islamic tolerance, a

myth largely invented by Jews and Western freethinkers as a stick with which to beat the Catholic Church. Islam was never a religion of tolerance and it is not tolerant by nature. Despite the way the apologists would like to depict it, Islam was spread by the sword and has been maintained by the sword throughout its history, not to mention the scourge and the cross. In truth it was the Arab empire that was spread by the sword and it is as an Arab empire that Islam is maintained to this day in the form of a religion largely invented to hold that empire together and subdue native populations. An unmitigated cultural disaster parading as God's will. Religious minorities were always second-class citizens in this empire and were only tolerated on sufferance and in abject deference to their Arab/Muslim masters; for polytheists and unbelievers there was no tolerance at all, it was conversion or death.

These repulsive characteristics are written into the Quran, the hadith and the sharia, and are an ineradicable feature of the religion. There is no way that Islam can reform itself and remain Islam, no way it can ever be made compatible with pluralism, free speech, critical thought and democracy. Anyone convinced they already possess the truth have no need for such things. Although Muslims resident in non-Muslim countries clamour for every kind of indulgence for their own beliefs and customs, there can be no doubt that given any kind of power they would impose their own beliefs and eliminate all difference. In short, as Ibn Warraq describes it in his Dedication, Islam is religious fascism, and it is only a feeble-minded political correctness that prevents it from being recognised as such.

Finally, we should note two further important points made by Ibn Warraq. First, that Islam never really encouraged science, if by science is meant *disinterested enquiry*. What Islam always meant by *knowledge* was religious knowledge, anything else was deemed dangerous to the faith. All the real science that occurred under Islam occurred despite the religion not because of it. Second, how indebted the Muslim world has always been to the West, not only to the Greeks in the beginning, but particularly in modern times in knowledge of its own intellectual and cultural history.

These unpalatable, half realised home truths are manifest in the contemporary Muslim world in the form of a massive resentment and inferiority complex:

It is a depressing fact that during the Gulf War almost every single Muslim and Arab intellectual sympathized with Saddam Hussein, because, we are told he stood up to the West. In this explanation is summed up all the sense of Islamic failure, and feelings of inferiority vis-à-vis the West. The Muslim world must be in a dire way if it sees hope in a tyrant who has murdered literally thousands of his own countrymen.

Indeed, and a Westerner can hardly imagine the courage it must take for Ibn Warraq to say as much.

The problem with a book such as this is that it will most likely never reach those most in need of it. That is to say young people in general and young Muslims in particular, those whose minds have not already been closed by fanaticism. How many libraries will stock it, or dare stock it if they knew its contents? A hardback at over twenty pounds, published by an American publisher, is not likely to find its way on to high-street book shelves alongside all those uncritical, paperback apologies for Islam that seem to be appearing in ever increasing numbers. What is needed is more books like Ibn Warraq's, published by British publishers, at reasonable prices and with good distribution. But dare they do it?

A minor fault that could be corrected in future editions is that several important books and authors mentioned in text and notes fail to appear in the bibliography.

5. Courageous author puts his life on the line⁸⁰

Why I am not a Muslim by Ibn Warraq, Prometheus Books, UK ISBN 0 87975 984 4. £22. Rationalist Press Association members: £ 15, Including postage, from RPA, Bradlaugh House.

Review: Daniel O'Hara

My own attempt to engage with Islam has, before reading this book, mainly been through talking with a group of Islamic students from Kings College, London, who regularly set up a lunchtime stall outside their college gates in The Strand, opposite the church of St. Mary Overy. Their views are extreme, but appear entirely within the mainstream Islamic tradition.

I have put it to them that it is ironic that they should be using such a platform to complain about the denial of *freedom of speech* for themselves inside the building (this after the college authorities had banned a debate they planned to hold on the execution of heretics and blasphemers) while admitting that they do not believe in freedom of speech for others. They agree with me that they would not be allowed to set up such a stall (even to promote Islam, let alone to criticise it) in Riyadh, Tehran, Islamabad or Dacca. But the irony that they should demand freedom of speech in order to denounce freedom of speech is entirely lost on them. They agree, that they despise *Western Democracy* and the freedoms it guarantees: but they are not above using those very freedoms to denounce and call for the abolition of freedom. They are as convinced as any Marxist, and perhaps with better reason, of the eventual triumph of their creed. At least Marxism is falsified by the failure of its prophecies concerning the withering of the state and the collapse of capitalism. Islam, for better or worse, admits of no falsification.

The Muslim students to whom I have recently been talking have not heard of Ibn Warraq or his book. If it came into their hands, they would probably want to burn it publicly, as their co-religionists in Bradford did with Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1989. Perhaps we should at least be grateful that there is no longer an Ayatollah Khomeini to issue a fatwa against *Why I am not a Muslim* and its author, put a price on his head and incite the faithful to murder him. But the fanatical intolerance of those Islamic students who demand their right to criticise others, yet who accept no reciprocal rights of others to criticise their position, clearly shows that and why a book like the one under review is both timely and necessary, even if one can think of several ways in which it might have been improved.

Mr Warraq was born and raised a Muslim, but is now a secular humanist, a freethinker and rationalist critic, not just of Islam but of all religions, regarding them, in David Hume's word, as *sick men's dreams*. As an apostate, he is, in Muslim eyes, guilty of a crime far more heinous than murder or even genocide. Indeed, murder and genocide have traditionally been the preferred methods of

⁸⁰ This review appeared in the December, 1995 issue of *The Freethinker*, a monthly published from London.

rooting out dissent, heresy, unbelief and rival religions and philosophies in all Islamic cultures. And this is as true today as it was in the 7th or the 9th Centuries. So we must salute *Why I am not a Muslim*, as R. Joseph Hoffmann does in the Foreword, as a *courageous* work. The author has, quite literally, put his life on the line.

Mr. Warraq tells us in his Preface that it was the Rushdie affair which galvanised him into writing his book, though he also tells us later, that he is *not a scholar or a specialist*. He has at any rate read widely and deeply, and succeeds in conveying a great deal of information about both the history and the tenets of Islam, and of its treatment of dissenters. I am unable to comment on the accuracy or balance of this part of the work, though it has every appearance of being thoroughly researched. I must, however, confess to finding some parts of the book rather tediously repetitive. It is surely enough to make a point well, without constantly quoting two or three other writers who essentially make the same point. Our author himself at one point observes (p. 133) that it may seem he is *belabouring the obvious*. But he wishes *more people would belabour the obvious, and more often*. The trouble is that those who most need it are unlikely to read the book, while for the rest of us, it causes avoidable longueurs. Skilful editing by the publishers could, in my opinion, have made the book tighter, sharper and of even greater value.

That being said, there is much here to provoke thought and the following-up of themes in the massive literature, most of it unknown to the general reader, with which Mr Warraq acquaints us. On some topics his comments are so pertinent and valuable that one would like to see them separately printed as a pamphlet. Particularly commendable is his critique of relativism, of the spinelessness of Western liberal intellectuals in the face of Islamic totalitarianism, and of our too-ready capitulation to extremely one-sided left-wing criticisms of the Western Democratic tradition. As one who currently lives in America but grew up in a country which now calls itself an Islamic republic, Mr Warraq is well placed to judge just how much is to be lost by the surrender of entirely justifiable pride in the real achievements of Western democracies. For this, he suggests, an insidious relativism and misplaced *political correctness* is largely responsible.

I shall quickly pass over the very extensive critical work on the Koran and other traditional sources of Islam which Mr Warraq relates, and his detailed history of the banditry, bloodshed and terror which chiefly characterised the early centuries of Islam, and which are resurgent in our own. It may come as a surprise to most readers to learn that the Koran did not achieve anything like its present shape until about two centuries after the death of Muhammed - roughly the same time it took the Christian Church to finalise its New Testament canon. And many of the traditional, extra-koranic sources for the life and teachings of the Prophet have been shown by recent scholarship to be extremely unreliable. So much for the basic Islamic dogmas of an infallible Prophet and an inerrant God-authored holy book. What the traditional sources tell us of the Prophet, however, make him seem as unappealing as any other manipulative and power-hungry opportunist in history. It is good to know that opposition to the Prophet and his teachings, and the totalitarian religion which grew out of them, goes back to his own time and peoples, and has never been entirely silenced, even though so many gainsayers have paid with their lives, as they still are doing. While Christendom has

much to be ashamed of, Mr Warraq suggests that Islam has been even more brutally culpable.⁸¹

Even today, the social teachings of Islam perpetuate the inferiority of women and their subjection to absolute control in all aspects of their lives - even as to whether and when they may leave the house - of their husbands (to whom they must remain constantly available, except when *unclean*, as objects of unrestrained sexual gratification), or if unmarried, their male guardians. Such unequal treatment of the sexes is defended in the literature I have picked up outside Kings College as "elevating the situation of the people from the level of animals (as is the case in the west), to one where the dignity and honour of all human beings is preserved and respected (as would be the case in an Islamic State)."

George Orwell and Franz Kafka together could surely not have dreamed up a more terrifying perversion of the truth. I commend Ibn Warraq's book as a much needed antidote and corrective to such shameless propaganda. Even if some of its chapters can be safely passed over by the general reader, there are others which will amply repay careful study by virtually everyone.

⁸¹ Here both Ibn Warraq and Daniel O'Hara are greatly mistaken. Christianity committed far greater crimes, for a longer period, and over a much larger area. The soft face which Christianity wears today has been forced upon it by its collapse in its traditional strongholds - Western Europe and North America.

6. Far more dangerous than Nazism - Dr. Jan Knappert⁸²

Ibn Warraq : Why I am not a Muslim, Prometheus Books, New York 1995, xvi, 402 pages, ISBN: 0-87975-984-4.

Ibn Warraq grew up in a Muslim family. Islam is a jealous religion so that any man who grew up in a Muslim family and is, for that reason considered a Muslim, not by his own volition, has to remain a Muslim for life, or else he is sentenced to death, and this sentence will be carried out as soon as a Muslim assassin can get him in the crossed hairs. Apostasy, in Arabic *irtidad* or *ridda*, is considered *treason* and a *danger to the (Islamic) state*. An apostatic woman is not executed but imprisoned until she agrees to be a Muslim again.

Incidentally, let the reader have no illusion about the application of Islamic law: it is not limited to the borders of Islamic states, but it is universal, so, death will strike anywhere.

The above paragraphs only serve to explain why certain excellent writers have to live in hiding even in Western Europe, ever since they have lost their faith in Islam, and said so in public.

A Muslim woman has to wear the veil everywhere, not just within the borders of an Islamic state. If divorced, her children can be kidnapped from her and smuggled to an Islamic state; that is legal by Islamic principles, for the children belong to the father, whether they want to or not. Women and children have no choice in Islam, they just have to obey.

At long last a writer has risen to the challenge posed by this religion of compulsion in the Middle of the World, and has put together in one book all the objectionable rules of Islam, and has made it into one of the best books about Islam that I have seen in many years.

Ibn Warraq has divided his book into 18 chapters (though the number 18 does not appear in the table of contents), including all the subjects you ever wanted to know about such as: *The Totalitarian Nature of Islam*; *Is Islam compatible with Democracy and Human Rights?* (Answer: no); *Arabic Imperialism, Islamic Colonialism; the Arab conquests and the position of non-Muslim subjects*. Here the Ottoman Empire should have been discussed, one of the cruellest empires that ever existed, especially in the 19th century, witness the massacres in Bulgaria in the 1870s. Even after the dissolution of the empire the Turks went on massacring Christians in Asia Minor, during the nineteen twenties. They did it so thoroughly, that Adolf Hitler, when learning about this, is said to have exclaimed: "What an excellent idea, we could try that on the Jews." He did. Now he stands condemned and the Turks go free. They can even continue their hideous work in Kurdistan with American agreement. But let us go back to this excellent book. It proposes: "to sow a drop of doubt in an ocean of dogmatic certainty by taking an uncompromising and critical look at almost all the fundamental tenets of Islam." (p. xiv)

⁸² Dr. Knappert is at present a Professor in the School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London. He knows many Asian and African languages and has travelled widely in the two continents for studying their literatures, religions and cultures. He has already published more than thirty books on many subjects including Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. The photocopy received by us does not mention where and when the review was published.

To this end, the author quotes all the classical European Islamologists, including Arberry, Bell, Blachere, Bousquet, Gibb, Goldziher, Hiskett, Holt, Hughes, Hurgronje, Lane, Lewis, Margoliouth, Muir, Nicholson, Nöldeke, Schacht (Snouck is the same as Hurgronje), Watt, Wensinck, Zwemer and of course, as many Oriental scholars: Al-Ma'arri, Al-Bukhari, Ibn ISHaq etc.

My problem is that all these names are familiar to me, but this book for the first time sets out clearly the common message of all these scholars: that Islam if it will one day be used by a demagogue of Hitler's calibre, will be a weapon far more dangerous than Nazism, since it claims a universal tenet: world conquest willed by an Arabic speaking God. At the moment of writing the Muslims are busy reconquering Bosnia by means of enthusiastic American generals. NATO is busy creating a Trojan horse in Europe, for future Islamisation.

This book is so rich that it is difficult to review all the subjects Ibn Warraq discusses so capably. Very important is his, to me convincing, argumentation that Islamic history as we read it in most of the history books, is based on a number of fictions. Firstly, the Koran (ch. 5) is a book full of contradictions in a confused and pompous style. Yet, Muslims must believe that it is the true word of God, and memorise it. It is obvious to the careful reader that the Koran cannot be the word of God. Numerous passages are spoken by Muhammad. More worrying for Muslims is the fact that the Koran is obviously heavily edited at different periods of its history.

Chapter 4 deals with Muhammad who was probably an epileptic (p. 89-90) who also showed clear signs of schizophrenia, as a result of which he had visions of angels and devils.

In Medina, Muhammad organizes raids on passing caravans which, he says, are justified by God. Soon he encourages his followers to assassinate political opponents. The booty is his. Read on: it is a fascinating story of crimes: *Muhammad's life*. Read also ch. 14: *Women in Islam*. That history still has to be written, although the first timid books written by women who had escaped from Islamic states are now appearing. It is a history of endless suffering at the hands of Muslim husbands who believe that women are treacherous demons, or at least tricky, amoral, irrational, unstable and so, inferior. This is one of the best chapters in the book, and should be studied by every woman contemplating to marry a Muslim man.

Islamic propaganda, funded by the unlimited means of the Gulf States, is responsible for a plethora of untrue ideas about Islam. Firstly, that it is a religion of peace. It is not and never was, witness the endless expansive wars fought by Muslim rulers and raiders. Even now the majority of conflicts of the world have Islam at their roots: Bosnia about which we are particularly misinformed, the Sudan, Chechenia, Afghanistan, Sin Kiang, Kashmir, Timor, Azerbaijan and the Philippines. Muslims will not rest before they rule the state. And when they do there will be no more democracy, witness the chapter on the *Position of non-Muslim subjects* (p. 214). Islam is a religion of dominance. The man has absolute power over his wives and children. The men in turn are ruled by the *imam*, the rector of the local mosque. No matter how peaceful a man's character may be, if his *imam* incites him from the pulpit to kill non-Muslims, he will do it, believing that it is God's will and therefore justified, even praiseworthy. The ruler of an Islamic state is always one man. If there is a woman prime minister she does not have the real power. Elections are either non-existent or a foreboding of disaster, as in the case of Algeria and Turkey. Enlightened rulers such as King Hassan, King Hussein or President Mubarak, is the best Islam can hope for. God forbid that Islam should ever come back to Europe. We shall all be slaves and serfs!

Greek Philosophy (chapter 11) never really influenced Islam. Some classical works on mathematics and medicine were translated into Arabic. Much fanfare is made about that, but it is forgotten that

the essence of Greek science is development, not slavish copying. In Europe, science has developed, whereas in the Middle East it stagnated. Arab land other Muslim doctors still use the compendium of Galen (Gallenus, in Arabic Djallénus) as pharmacology.

Ibn Warraq's book is so inspiring and so full of brilliant ideas and hard facts as well, that the reviewer never stops wanting to mention further chapters. Ch. 10 deals with *Heretics and Heterodoxy, Atheism and Free Thought, Reason and Revelation*. It proves that Islamic culture was never tolerant. Ibn Warraq displays here an incredible knowledge of Islamic philosophical history. It becomes clear while reading him that Islam did not produce or encourage the philosophers but condemned them; many died in prison.

They still do. The tyranny which we witness in Iran is not exceptional in the history of Islam. Persons of other persuasions have always been eliminated and exterminated. That is what is happening now to the Christians of Timor and Nias, those in Azerbaijan, the Sudan and Algeria.

Chapter 17 is likewise of vital importance for all social scientists, and for all social workers. Muslims mutilating the genitals of girls will claim that they have a right to do so since our countries protect religious freedom (their own countries do not). There is, however, a limit to the freedom any religion can claim, when such freedom results in suffering either of children or of animals, as in the case of slaughter without anesthesia. Forced marriages of minors is a problem that feminists will have to turn their attention to. But it is easier to confront western men who are infinitely more reasonable, than Muslims, who are polite but determined. When Islam comes, men have little to lose, but women lose their freedom of movement, freedom of employment and so forth.

We must be extremely grateful to Ibn Warraq for his revealing book.

Some Revealing Press Reports

1. Legacy of hate: Hindus and Muslims must endeavour to undo partition

By K. R. Malkani⁸³

Indian Express
New Delhi, 15 August 1994

The Hindu-Muslim problem is a fact of Indian life. This problem is a legacy of the past, particularly that of the recent past, when the British gave it a new and dangerous twist, resulting in the partition of India. And it is a problem that sours relations, distorts the whole Indian polity and acts as a drag on the country. The task of Indian statesmanship is to resolve this problem amicably in the light of historic experience and the Indian genius of harmonisation.

Gandhiji used to compare the Hindu-Muslim conflict to Saivite-Vaishnavite rivalries of bygone ages. He was probably oversimplifying matters. Saivites and Vaishnavites - and Buddhists and Jains - shared the same idiom, the same milieu and the same culture. Islam represents not only a new religion, a new kind of religion, but also a religion couched in a Turko-Persio-Arabian idiom. Fortunately, the Prophet of Islam has a very positive view of India. He once said to his wife Hind, "*May Allah bless the country after which you are named.*" That is something to build on.

Also the Hindu-Muslim interaction over the centuries gives hope for a harmonious solution in the fullness of time. But for the British interregnum, with its *Divide and Rule* games, Hindus and Muslims would, by now, have worked out an abiding and mutually satisfactory system of peaceful coexistence, just as Catholics and Protestants have done in Europe in spite of long and bloody religious wars. Let us not forget that Hindus and Muslims jointly fought the British in 1857.

Nor was this a one-time exception. The Hindu-Muslim interaction has produced gems like Kabir and Khusrau, Akbar and Dara Shikoh, Jaisi and Rahiman. Mughal rule was basically a Mughal-Rajput coalition. And Safdarjang was busy putting together a Mughal-Maratha coalition when the tragedy of 1761 struck the country.⁸⁴ After Ghazni and Ghori invasions, there were no wholly Muslim or wholly Hindu armies in India.

As per ancient Indian royal practice, the Mughal monarchs drank only Gangajal. They celebrated Basant and Holi, Dussehra and Divali. Jahangir used to have Shraadh ceremony for his late father Akbar. While the polity was basically in Muslim hands, the economy was in Hindu hands. Muslim kings and nawabs invariably had Hindu accountants. And Aurangzeb trusted only Rajputs to guard his harem. Apart from the loot by Ghazni, Nadirshah and Abdali, there was no drain on wealth from India even after centuries of Muslim rule, the **Wealth of Ind** was known the world over.

⁸³ Shri K. R. Malkani, ex-editor of the RSS weekly Organiser, refuses resolutely to read Islamic Dogmatics, howsoever authentic. His appetite for Islamic Apologetics, however, is insatiable. He can swallow any number of spurious Traditions (hadis) without batting an eye. And he has a genius for producing sweet stories about Islam and Muslim out of his hat. The stories that follow in this article provide some specimens of wishful thinking on a spree.

⁸⁴ Safdar Jang died in October 1754, seven years before 'the tragedy of 1761' by which Malkani means the Third Battle of Panipat in which Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas with active assistance of an army from the Nabobdom of Oudh. In any case, even during Safdar Jang's time, the Marathas were his hired mercenaries rather than his allies.

Notwithstanding Islamic injunctions, the Indian Muslims gave themselves *Pirs* - on the model of *Gurus*. The Rath evolved into the *Tazia*. And even the Lord of the Seven Hills of Tirupati was given a Turkish wife, *Thuluka Nachiyar*. Sir Syed Ahmed, founder of the Aligarh movement, initially regarded himself a Hindu. Even the East India Company referred to Indian Muslims as **Hindu Musalmans**. The word Indian was rightly translated as Hindu. That should happen again.

The Hindu-Muslim problem as we know it today is basically a gift of the British after 1857 - and particularly after 1921. It was they who took steps to divide Hindu and Muslim, Hindu and Sikh, upper castes and lower castes, *Aryan* North and *Dravidian* South - and who succeeded the most in dividing Hindus and Muslims. We have to see through this game and work steadily for effecting Hindu-Muslim reconciliation on the unexceptionable principle of **Justice for All and Appeasement of None**.

Among the Indian parties, Bharatiya Janata Party alone can undertake this task. It is just like in the US where only the Republicans, traditionally known for their strong anti-communism, could win and call off the Cold War with Russia; the US Democrats could never have done it because they were generally viewed by Americans as *Pinkos* and *appeasers*. Likewise, because BJP is perceived as the guardian angel of national interests, its principled policy of **Justice for All** will not be misunderstood as sell-out of Hindu interests. And at the same time it will command greater acceptance among Muslims who view the Congress as hypocritical and BJP as frank but honest.

Sri Aurobindo's articulation of the problem and its solution appears singularly apt: "*Hindu-Mohamedan unity cannot be effected by political adjustment or Congress Batteries. It must be sought deeper down, in the heart and in the mind, for where the causes of disunion are, there the remedies must be sought. We must strive to remove the causes of misunderstanding by a better mutual knowledge and sympathy; we must extend the unflattering love of the patriot to our Mussalman brother, remembering that to him too our Mother has given a permanent place in her bosom; but we must cease to approach him falsely or flatter him out of a selfish weakness and cowardice. What is wanted is some new religious movement among the Mohammedans which would remodel their religion and change the stamp of their temperament.*"⁸⁵

Specifically we can consider the following steps:

1. Rewrite Indian history - not to whitewash negative aspects, but to incorporate the positive ones, deliberately left out by British historians;⁸⁶
2. Accept Indian Muslims as *Muslim Indians* or *Mohammedi Hindus* and see them with a friendly eye - *mitrasya chakshusha, pashyema* - as our brothers, while the latter regard Bharatvarsh as sacred Matribhoomi and look upon partition as a sin;
3. Unhesitatingly expose any wrongdoing or wrong expression by erring Muslims, but not suspect or condemn the community wholesale;
4. We don't have to be allergic to Muslim States. We have age-old cultural links with Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia and these links need reviving and strengthening. And we can have cooperative relations with Egypt, Algeria etc. in our war on fundamentalist terrorism;
5. Every Indian should eschew any pejorative terms or slogans about the other community;
6. Until now Muslim leadership has been misappropriated by the likes of Shahabuddin and Imam Bukhari. Their intemperate statements provoke equally intemperate Hindu response.

⁸⁵ Karmayogin, Vol. 2, P. 24.

⁸⁶ Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Muslim-Marxist historians from Aligarh and JNU have already done the job and whitewashed Muslim rule in India beyond recognition. In fact, Malkani has swallowed that whitewashed version ♦ hook, line and sinker. Unfortunately for him, the British historians were too honest to accomplish that feat. It is a shame that he should be selling to Hindus the aspersions which Muslim and Marxist manipulators of human minds or crooks like ♦Pandit♦ Sunderlal have cast on honest scholarship.

Muslim intelligentsia should come forward to respond coolly to Hindu-Muslim situations, as and when they arise. Their moderation will also moderate the Hindu response.

Through these and other measures we should decelerate the level of conflict and prepare for national harmony in the Hindustan Peninsula. Once we move in this general direction of Hindu-Muslim reconciliation, the whole rationale of partition will melt away. Pakistan may continue as a single State - or it may decentralise into half a dozen States - but the whole area then would be separate but friendly. Our political goal should be a confederation or Common Market of the Hindustan Peninsula, with proper autonomy for the States or provinces, and security of life, limb and honour for all people from the Khyber Pass to Kanyakumari.

2. BJP shifts stand to woo Muslims

by S.N.M. Abdi

The Times of India
New Delhi, 2 March 1995

KISHANGANJ, March 1 - The BJP is wooing the electorate in this Muslim-dominated district, 18 km from the Indo-Bangladesh border, by inviting Bangladeshis to *enter not in a clandestine manner but through the front door.*

The change in the BJP's rigid stand on *infiltration* has given the party a foothold in Thakurganj, Bahadurganj and Kishanganj constituencies, which go to the polls shortly.

About 65 per cent of the voters in Kishanganj are Muslims. Defending the party's shift in policy, district BJP president B.N. Mukherjee said, "**All political parties are engaged in appeasing Muslims. Why shouldn't we? The shift in our policy became imperative due to the ground realities here.**"

Both Mr. Mukherjee and district general secretary Rajeshwar Baid claimed that they were merely toeing the line of Arif Beg and Uma Bharati, who addressed public meetings here in September and December last year. Mr. Baid quoted from Ms. Bharati's speech: "**Starving Muslims of Bangladesh are welcome in India. They should come through the front door and record their plight so that India can take up their cause internationally.**"⁸⁷

Earlier, the top leadership of the BJP-RSS-VHP combine had propagated that Hindu immigrants from Bangladesh should be treated as refugees and Muslims as infiltrators. The Sangh parivar had initiated a movement to identify and deport the *infiltrators*. The BJP had even described Kishanganj as a **Mini Bangladesh**.

The election folder released by the BJP state unit is also critical of the Janata Dal's *appeasement* policy, especially in those districts where Bangladeshi immigrants have reportedly settled in large numbers. "*Our citizens, cattle and land are being held to ransom by foreign nationals who have been provided ration cards by unscrupulous politicians for building vote-banks,*" the folder alleges.

The district unit is pursuing a different lime. "*Otherwise, it would have been impossible to even venture into rural areas,*" Mr. Baid said. "*We have been branded as mosque-breakers by our political rivals and the electorate feared that we would seize the loud-speakers that mosques use to summon the faithful to prayer, if we ever came to power.*"

Going by the upbeat mood at the local BJP office at the end of the day's campaigning in remote areas, it is clear that the party has pulled out all stops to garner votes. In the 1990 assembly elections, the BJP polled 32,000 votes here. In the 1991 Lok Sabha election, its share shot up to 78,000.

⁸⁷ One has only to possess a large larynx in order to become a leading light of the BJP, as is the case with the BJP's star performer Uma Bharati. She stands in no need of any brown matter in her brain.

“If we succeed in increasing our share of the votes this time,” Mr. Baid said, “it would mean that the Muslims are less apprehensive of the BJP and are willing to give us a chance. A pragmatic elder brother can always cajole the truant sibling to fall in line,” he added.

3. BJP promoting a ‘minority-friendly’ image for elections by Express New Service

Indian Express
New Delhi, 7 April 1995

New Delhi - While declaring that liberation of the Varanasi and Mathura temples was not on its agenda, the Bharatiya Janata Party has not entirely foreclosed the potentially emotional issues.

Fashioning an ambivalent strategy ahead of the next year's general elections, the BJP after its Panaji session, has sought to don a *minority-friendly* image, while insisting that its *basic image will stay intact*.

In other words, the ideological mascot of Hindutva, stays firmly embedded.

The BJP members, particularly those originally belonging to the banned Vishwa Hindu Parishad, will take part in the VHP's forthcoming campaign for liberation of the Kashi Vishwanath and Krishna Janmabhoomi shrines.

Secondly, the BJP has declared that it will do nothing to persuade other constituents of the Sangh Parivar to drop the campaign for the two temples.

In effect, Mr. L.K. Advani's offer at one point of time, to persuade these constituents to call off the stir if the Ayodhya tangle was suitably resolved, now stands withdrawn.

And finally, the party has made clear in unequivocal terms, that there are no fissures in the Sangh Parivar. This is after the VHP leader, Mr. Giriraj Kishore, announced plans to intensify the stir and Mr. L.K. Advani at Panaji, asserted that the two temples were not on the party's agenda.

The BJP vice-president, Mr. Krishan Lal Sharma, explaining the party's stand said, "We have made it very clear that the two temples are not on our agenda".

However, asked if this meant that the issue was closed forever, as far as the BJP was concerned, he said, "We are talking about it now. Can anyone talk of what happens in the future? Whatever resolutions etc., are passed, are for the present. The question of now or never therefore, does not arise".

Which means that the door is still open, albeit by a toe-hold. As the party comes within striking distance of Delhi, following its success in the recent round of State elections, the religious element will continue to be down-played.

In fact, the BJP State units are dispatching workers into the minority pockets to assure them that no harm shall come to them.

However, should things change dramatically in the build-up to the general elections, the BJP appears to reserve the option of falling back on the religion card.

In any case, thanks to the strict code of conduct, the BJP platform itself will not witness the religious fervour, but the message would go out of the other constituents of the Sangh Parivar.

Observers here point out the recent campaign in Gujarat where Sadhvi Rithambra and other VHP leaders, laid the ground for the BJP to mount its campaign.

4. BJP looks for Muslim plank to move towards Delhi

by Ashwini Kumar

Indian Express
New Delhi, 7th April, 1995

NEW DELHI - The Goa session of the Bharatiya Janata Party's national executive might be seen as a minor milestone in what the party describes as its *onward march to Delhi*. The party sent out a signal to its cadres to reach out to the Muslims, and acknowledged the community's *very valuable contribution* to its recent success at the polls.

For the record, the BJP has always said it did not discriminate between Hindus and others. It was the sole practitioner of **Secularism** as the Constitution meant it; the other political parties merely **appeased** the minorities in the name of secularism. And after the 1993 debacle, the party has also began softening its Hindutva appeal.

But going soft on Hindutva and making a formal reach-out-to-the-minorities appeal to its cadres are two different things.

The message from Goa was more categorical than the BJP has put out in recent years. In his opening remarks at the meeting, the party president, Mr. L.K. Advani stressed the importance of reaching out to *all sections of the people*. And asked his partymen to dispel the *misapprehensions* about the BJP among the minorities.

The closing address, delivered by Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, reinforced the same message. He said the party need not compromise on Hindutva, and there would be issues on which the BJP and sections among the Muslims will differ. But the BJP must assure the Muslims that their lives, property and dignity were not under threat if the BJP came to power.

The woo-Muslims-but-don't-make-compromises directive was almost inevitable at this stage, when the BJP is keen to cast itself in the mould of a conventional alternative to the Congress. Mr. Advani, in fact, projected his party as occupying a even higher moral ground.

The task before us is not merely victory in elections; the task is to keep the nation together, he told the national executive.

Besides, the Hindutva wave has been waning for quite some time - after taking the BJP to heights of electoral success. Following the debacle in the 1993 Assembly elections, when the BJP failed even to retain Uttar Pradesh, the party began on a gradual campaign to rub off the one-issue label which had stuck badly during its Ram Mandir phase.

The last two rounds of the Assembly elections were fought on a broadened campaign plank, which included corruption and criminalisation of politics. Hindutva or **cultural nationalism** was left deliberately understated, but it remained on the agenda.

During the campaign in the two rounds, the BJP raised topics like illegal migration from Bangladesh, Hubli flag-raising and the government's *soft-pedalling* on Kashmir. The issues went down well with the BJP's old Hindutva constituency, but the party deliberately labelled them under other omnibus heads - as matters which affected the **security** of the country and exposed the **vote-bank politics** played by other parties.

The BJP strategy worked in Maharashtra and Gujarat where a section of the Congress-voting Muslims appear to have switched sides. It was not altogether a positive vote. Going by conventional analysis, many Muslims voted as they did because they felt *betrayed* by the Congress, and *impressed* by the BJP trait of being open about its ideology.

By playing the Goa message to minorities, the BJP - according to one party leader - was responding to the confidence reposed in it by the Muslims in the two states. He said no national executive [members?] opposed Mr. Advani or Mr. Vajpayee during the Goa meeting on the approach to minorities suggested by them. But privately, a few hardcore members have questioned the need of making what they felt was too overt a gesture to Muslims.

In any case, the BJP will have to convince the minorities that it is serious about seeking their vote through its actions.

At his Goa press conference, for instance, Mr. Advani said all the *right* things. Illegal migration by the Bangladeshi Muslims was being dealt with by the BJP governments in the states, but the issue was not the *top priority*, which were education, health and developing infrastructure.

5. BJP girds up to appease Muslims⁸⁸

by Shrikant Sharma

Navabharat Times
New Delhi, 9 April 1995

NEW DELHI, 8, April. After BJP clearly announced in Goa that Muslim vote is no more **the forbidden fruit** in the elections, BJP leaders have started making all-out efforts for looking more secular than the Congress and, on the other hand, they are out to have some special programmes to lure Muslim voters.

In this venture of attracting Muslim voters, BJP will depend more upon its Muslim rather than its Hindu leaders. It was quite evident in the zeal with which Muslim leaders were talking on their way back from Goa. While talking to the press, Muslim leaders sent out signals that in the forthcoming parliamentary elections they were planning to work with quicker paces in this direction. This will include public meetings alongwith person-to-person interactions.

Leaders like Arif Beg seemed to be more enthusiastic in this matter and, owing to his over-enthusiasm, leaders from different states after coming back from Goa, have been planning his election tours in their respective Muslim majority areas. Beg's plan of touring Muslim majority areas in different states will probably start from Haryana's Mewat region. Mr. Suraj Bhan, former MP from Ambala and Vice-President of the BJP, and Mrs. Kamala Varma, former Haryana minister and BJP's National Executive member, talked to Mr. Beg in this regard.

Many leaders are of the opinion that Muslim leaders like Mr. Arif Beg would have more influence on Muslims than the moderate leaders like the leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mr. Sikander Bakht. In the course of his talk, Mr. Beg does not hesitate to proclaim proudly that he had the honour of defeating Mr. Shankar Dayal Sharma. Sixty years old Mr. Beg is a national level Secretary in the party and he has already held ministerial portfolios at the Centre and in Madhya Pradesh.

Mr. Beg's plan is to make at least a thousand Muslim workers parade in front of party President Lal Krishna Advani. On being asked about the number of Muslims in the BJP, Mr. Beg says: "*The parade by a thousand Muslim workers in uniform in front of Advani will be held in presence of the media itself. This is a difficult task no doubt, but not impossible.*" When asked whether they would parade in front of Advani in RSS uniform, Mr. Beg said, "Their uniform would be shewani, which would cost at least rupees two thousand each."

He is eloquent about his day-dream, "My dream is that there should be a rally of at least one lakh Muslims under BJP's banner at Delhi's Ramlila Grounds."

The BJP leaders will have to face a number of difficulties in order to convince the common Muslim populace about their changed policy. Whatever the BJP leaders like Kailash Joshi and Pyarelal Khandelwal may say, by having a glance at the party history from the very outset, the common people, whether Hindu or Muslim, regard the BJP as a Hindu party only. That is why this tryst of

⁸⁸ Translated from Hindi.

tilting towards Muslims may create on the one hand the danger of its Hindu voters' defection and on the other hand on BJP's part this would be a breach of promise. It is to be seen as to how much trust the Muslim voters will place in the BJP.

Joshi and Khandelwal say that BJP's doors have always been kept open for Muslims, so nothing special has happened which could be called a change in the party's policy. This is all the scurrilous campaign of the Congress, they maintain. It has been the party's policy, according to them, that there should be justice for all and no favour to any particular community.

These leaders say that they have been in constant contact with Muslim voters and are trying to clear Muslim misapprehensions. Muslim voters have the complaint that the BJP wants to create a **Hindu Rashtra** in India. To this these leaders reply that India is already a **Hindu Rashtra**, for, Hindus are in majority here. But, there is no plan of action for creating a **Hindu State**. The present Constitution of the country is very good, they say, and BJP does not have any plan for changing it.

In this regard it is necessary to study the call given to party workers by party President Lal Krishna Advani in his inaugural speech made at the National Executive meeting in Goa. He has asked them to go all-out for removing misapprehensions among the minorities, particularly the Muslims. It is evident from this that BJP leaders are watching Muslim voters' attitude towards their party. They know the fact that Muslim voters, disappointed by the Congress and NF-LF, have started looking with some hope towards BJP. Of course, it is a negative vote, but BJP which had thought of attaining power without Muslim votes, has been realising its advantage.

About the reason for Muslim voters coming to BJP, these leaders are saying that Muslim voters are realising that the Congress and other parties do not practise what they preach, but BJP does.

In a nutshell, at present BJP leaders have the forthcoming elections in mind and for that they have, on the one hand, to tighten their grip over Hindu voters congregated under Ram Mandir Movement and, on the other hand, they have to grab Muslim votes coming towards their party by telling Muslims the difference between **Hindu Rashtra** and **Hindu State**.

6. Khurana's go-slow on migrants issue irks hawks by Shubhendu Parth

The Sunday Observer
New Delhi, 9-15 April 1995

NEW DELHI, APRIL 8 - Delhi Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana has decided to go slow on the issue of deporting illegal Bangladeshi migrants from the National Capital Territory [NCT] region, belying expectations that his government would take a cue from its counterpart in Maharashtra, where his Bharatiya Janata Party is ruling in alliance with the Shiv Sena.

According to sources in the BJP's Delhi unit, the move has been dictated by the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections in 1996. Bangladeshi nationals, estimated to number three lakh, form a major part of the electorate in some parts of East Delhi, having been settled there with the sole motive of creating a vote bank. A Delhi administration official who had supervised electoral enrolment in one of the NCT constituencies said on condition of anonymity that even a few BJP leaders were involved in this racket.

The go-slow instruction has also been prompted by a recent Supreme Court directive asking the state administration to independently hear each and every individual suspected of being a foreign national.

However, the decision has enraged that section of the BJP leadership which is closely linked to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. B.L. Sharma Prem, member of Parliament from East Delhi, reacted strongly by saying Khurana had no power to take such a decision. "The decision has to be taken by the central leadership," he thundered.

The MP, one of the BJP's most vocal politicians, has for long been demanding the deportation of Bangladeshi Muslims from the capital. "The problem should be solved once and for all," he said, "even if force has to be applied."

Unfortunately for Prem, the party's central leadership too is uncertain what to do. In fact, its *soft* stand on Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray's call for the eviction of illegal Bangladeshi migrants has created much confusion in the BJP ranks. Prem himself acknowledged as much, and said that as a committed party worker he would abide by the collective decision.

The BJP sources said that though the deportation of illegal migrants was one of the party's main electoral slogans in November 1993, it has been unable to do much after forming the government in Delhi because the NCT does not have an independent home department and the issue is being handled by the Union home ministry.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ We have misplaced and not been able to find in our collection in a significant report according to which, soon after becoming the Chief Minister of Delhi State, Madan Lal Khurana recommended in so many words that the Muslim infiltrators should be equipped with Green Cards for staying and working in India, and helped to become Indian citizens in due course. It was left to some Congress leaders to protest that Green Cards were never and nowhere given to illegal immigrants, and that no country in the world can afford to give Green Cards when the number of immigrants runs into millions. Khurana's saying and doings over a number of years leave the impression that he is more of a calculating machine than a man with a moral sense, political or otherwise. His clowning for keeping

7. Pampering the minority ego

by Talveen Singh⁹⁰

Indian Express

New Delhi, 16 April 1995

Are there no limits to what Muslims can demand, and get away with, in the imagined cause of their religion? India is not a Muslim country and, by the grace of our 30 million gods, never will be. So there is no reason why our political leaders should have to start kowtowing and running scared everytime a bunch of semi-literate mullahs gets up and starts making a noise.

Whenever this happens, it angers non-Muslim Indians and strengthens the hands of Hindu fanatics. And yet, we have just seen Shiv-Sena government in Maharashtra buckle under Muslim pressure and suspend the release of Mani Ratnam's *Bombay*. It is a film about inter-religious marriage and the triumph of peace over communal hatred. These are subjects that should be close to the heart of our allegedly secular rulers. *Bombay* should have been encouraged with tax exemptions, awards, premiers on Doordarshan. Instead it has been considered 'controversial' right from the start.

Except in the eyes of fanatics and fundamentalists, who would prefer a film about Hindu-Muslim hatred, what can be considered controversial about communal harmony? Surely, the Maharashtra Government, which is in any case not well-known for its fondness of the Muslims community, could have taken a firmer line against the ragtag bunch of maulvis and Muslim fundamentalists who were making a noise? They could have been told that stern measures would be taken against anyone who tried to disrupt the screening of the film.

Instead, after seeing the film they came up with a list of objections so absurd that they should have been considered ludicrous in our secular land but they have been taken seriously.

They object, we are told, to the last shot. The Muslim girl while eloping with her Hindu husband carried the Koran in her hand. This was bad, they said, because it seemed to imply that her marriage had Islamic sanction. They also objected to verses from the Koran being chanted in the background.

Nor did they approve of the film's first scene which shows a woman lifting her burqa off her face. They need to be asked why this is suddenly objectionable when thousands of other Hindi films have shown similar sequences to great romantic effect. But nobody asks these questions so the list continues. Offence was taken, we are told, because a Hindu family was shown being burned alive. A Muslim family is also shown being similarly murdered, because this also happened in the terrible riots of 1992, but our Muslim objectors are selective in their disapproval.

The question that the Maharashtra Government needs to answer is why it is trying to reason with fundamentalists instead of telling them firmly that their threats and protests will not be tolerated. Could it be that the State's new BJP Home Minister is following the same Congress policies that the leader of his party, L.K. Advani, so effectively rubbished as *appeasement* when he trundled across

himself visible, never stops. There is no political sin under the sky which he is unwilling to commit in order to gain a temporary advantage. The alliance he has sought and succeeded in patching up are fatal for Hindu society.

⁹⁰ This columnist is no friend of Hindus or Hindutva. She believes that Hindu-Muslim differences are no more than *a fight between two brands of fanatics*, which superior minded fence-sitters like her can resolve if given a chance. Her ire is directed towards *Hindu fanatics*, most of the time. But once in a while, she does come down upon *Muslim fanatics* as well.

India on his rathyatra? Ibrahim Tai of some organisation called the Raza Academy is reported to have said, “**If this movie is shown there will be a third riot in Bombay.**” Should he not have been arrested instead of being invited to a private screening of the film?

If one bunch of fundamentalists can get away with their threats of violence how is it going to be possible to stop another bunch from tearing down the next mosque they come across?

Emboldened by their success in stopping Bombay, Maharashtra’s Muslims notched up another little fundamentalist victory last week. Nine Ahmediyas, who were peacefully distributing religious literature in Malegaon, were attacked by a mob of armed Muslims who beat them within an inch of their lives with sticks, whips and stones. They were inspired, clearly, by the fact that the Pakistan Government has declared Ahmediyas as heretics. After the attack, Malegaon police arrested 15 of the culprits but this is what happened to them, as reported by this newspaper. *“All those arrested were let off soon afterwards when a section of the mob marched to the police station and demanded their release, threatening to otherwise attack the police,”*. Appeasement, Mr. Advani?

Yes, Appeasement it is. The same kind of appeasement that caused the Rajiv Gandhi Government to change maintenance laws for Muslim women, in accordance with the Shariat, and to ban Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* because Muslims thought of it as a blasphemous book.

Inevitably, the country paid the price with a Hindu backlash but nobody has ended up learning any lessons. Especially, not Muslim leaders. They still haven’t understood that by raising objections to films on communal harmony and by making other, similarly silly demands they divert attention from the genuine problems that the community suffers from.

There is, for instance, the question of TADA. It has been seriously misused by State Government, especially Gujarat and Maharashtra, and most of the victims have been Muslim. There are problems like the fact that most victims of communal riots tend to be Muslim and that justice rarely gets done. If organisations like the Raza Academy and the Muslim League would raise these issues, along with issues of education backwardness among Muslims and instances of discrimination in employment, they might find genuine support from other Indians. They might also do real good to their community but they continue to talk of irrelevances, of matters they consider Islamic, and even when it comes to Islamic matters they are selective.

We did not hear one word of criticism, for instance, from organisations like the Raza Academy, and similar ilk, when a 14-year-old Christian boy was sentenced to death in Pakistan. I remember asking an Imam about it and he said that there was nothing wrong with the punishment because it was in accordance with the Islamic law of blasphemy. When I pointed out that the boy was illiterate and so could not have written the allegedly blasphemous slogans he said, “Well, it must be alright, they must know what they’re doing.”

The boy survived. But, in Iran, women criminals who are virgins are raped before being executed. That is the law. Next time Muslim leaders demand Shariat laws they should ask for Shariat punishments as well. Perhaps, this will make our secular leaders realise that India is not a Muslim country. We cannot be secular if we continue to pander to every, silly religious demand.

8. BJP to bring out Koran in Sanskrit

by Sujata Anandan

Indian Express
New Delhi, 21 April 1995

BOMBAY - The Koran in Sanskrit? The idea is not as bizarre as it may sound.

This is the Bharatiya Janata Party's spoonful of honey for the Muslim minorities in the country as opposed to their earlier acerbic rhetoric that the party has been finding hard to live down since the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

According to sources in the BJP, a Sanskrit translation of the Koran will be attempted by the party's Muslim members, led by its Minorities Cell Chief Arif Baig, soon after the three day convention of its core group ends.

High on the agenda of the convention is a follow up of the resolutions with regard to the minorities at the Goa convention of the party early this month.

In that convention following party president L.K. Advani's call to **remove misconceptions (about the BJP) in the minds of the minorities**, the party resolved to revive the earlier Congress slogan of Hindu-Muslim bhai-bhai.

The Sanskrit translation of the Koran is to be the party's first bridge to the Muslim masses.

Muslims may however, not be impressed. The reactions among them have ranged from scepticism to caution with the rider, *the leopard can never change its spots. But let us wait and watch.*

The BJP's attempt to garner the minority vote for the Lok Sabha polls comes from the realisation that the favourable results in Maharashtra and Gujarat for the right parties were an essential fallout of the disillusionment of the minorities with the Congress.

9. Vajpayee for diluting stand on 'Hindutva'

The Times of India

New Delhi, 22 April 1995

BOMBAY, APRIL 21 - Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Atal Behari Vajpayee has urged toning down of the Hindutva stand of the BJP to avoid alienating Muslims.

Muslims had supported the party in large numbers in the recent assembly elections. He is understood to have told a closed door national level conclave of the party at Virar in Thane district.

The party must tread a 'middle path' to inspire confidence among the minorities, he said. In this context, he proposed that issues of Krishna Janmabhoomi at Mathura and the Vishwanath temple at Benaras should be dropped from the party's agenda.

Mr. Vajpayee said the minorities felt alienated from Congress and looked up to BJP as a national alternative.

The conclave urged BJP governments in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Delhi to expedite implementation of public welfare programmes and called on party units in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh to broaden their base at the grassroots level and strengthen their organisational set up.

A special discussion was held to formulate an electoral strategy in Uttar Pradesh.

Senior party leader Sikandar Bakht and chief of party's minority cell Arif Beg have been entrusted with the work of popularising party programmes.

(Agencies)

10. More Space for ‘namaaz’ urged

By Vidyadhar Date

The Times of India
New Delhi, 29 April, 1995

BOMBAY, April 28.

Some leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Maharashtra have proposed that the floor space index (FSI) for mosques in Bombay be increased to accommodate a larger number of people offering namaaz (prayers). This would also help end offering of prayers on the roads outside mosques.⁹¹

The offering of namaaz on roads had caused considerable tension in Bombay two years ago with the Shiv Sena and the BJP voicing strong protests and organising maha artis on the roads.

Deputy chief minister and home minister Gopinath Munde is understood to have supported the move for granting higher FSI which would enable the mosques to build additional space in their premises. The Shiv Sena is also not averse to the idea, sources said.

President of the Bombay unit of the BJP Vedprakash Goyal said the move was not aimed at wooing Muslims. The facility could be extended to temples too. In the crowded Kabutarkhana area in Dadar a mosque, a temple and a chapel existed side by side. In such areas there was greater need to provide more space for worshippers.

Former ministers Rafiq Zakaria and Ishaq Jamkhanawala have welcomed the proposal. Mr. Zakaria said: “The Congress government should have taken the decision long ago. The move shows that the BJP and the Sena are sensitive to the requirements of the minorities.”

Mr. Zakaria said steps should be taken to ensure that the FSI facility was not misused for purposes other than religious work. Shops and other commercial establishments should be prevented from being set up. “A committee should be set up to consider the issues which were involved. Some of the mosques were remarkable for their historical and architectural value,” he suggested.

Mr. Muzafar Hussain, a noted Islamic scholar, said: “The Shariat provided for offering namaaz in three shifts when space was limited. However, in some areas in Bombay the mosques were so small that they could not accommodate the devout even in three shifts.”

⁹¹ It was assumed that Muslims sprawl out on roads for doing namaz simply because the space within mosques cannot accommodate them. This is a Big Lie. Sprawling out on public thoroughfares is a part of Muslim aggression as advocated by their religion. “Muslims,” says the Hidayah “should allow the narrowest passage to the Kafirs going on throughfares.” In any case, why should Hindu taxpayers’ money be spent on widening mosques when plenty of petro-dollars have been pouring into the country for building bigger and bigger mosques in which firearms can be stored, and madrasas in which warriors for Islam can be trained?

Mr. Hussain said according to the basic tenets of Islam, prayers should not be offered on a public thoroughfare. If it became necessary to use the public premises, permission of the authorities concerned should be taken. Islam also stressed the importance of clean surroundings at the place of prayers.

11. Chhabildas sticks to his guns on minority votes

by Deepak Trivedi

Indian Express
New Delhi, 12 July 1995

GANDHINAGAR - Former Gujarat Chief Minister Chhabildas Mehta has called for drastic measures by the Congress to win back majority support which, he claims, was lost in the search for minority votes. This, he said, should be done after washing away the impression from the majority that the Congress was interested only in the minority.

Hardly a week after some Muslim leaders went to the Congress president, demanding Mr. Mehta's suspension for his alleged anti-minority stand, the latter queered their pitch in an exclusive interview to Indian Express. He not only stuck to his stand that the appeasement policy cost the party dearly in Gujarat, but also insisted that it must openly woo the majority even at the cost of minority votes.

"Though we have done so much for the minorities, they feel disillusioned. In the process, we also donated majority votes to the BJP. We must now have a clear stand and do away with the appeasement policy. The need of the hour is introspection. We have to search a way out to win the confidence of the majority and erase the impression that the Congress caters only to minority interests," Mr. Mehta said.

Obviously taken up by the VHP's performance in garnering support for the BJP during the Assembly elections, Mr. Mehta came up with a controversial suggestion to revive his party in Gujarat: "I strongly believe that the Congress must also have a front organisation such as the VHP. The people of Gujarat are very religious, rather god-fearing. Till the Centre imposed an unnecessary ban on the VHP, the BJP had no major poll plank. They encashed on this. The public meetings of **Sadhvi Rithambara** and others were an astounding success. The front organisations of the Congress exist on paper only."

Mr. Mehta also said that the Congress should not worry about the impact of setting up of such an organisation on the minorities. "It will not make a difference to us because the minorities have been openly saying that they will not vote for the Congress," he argued.

Delving into the reasons for the deviation of the Muslims from the Congress, the former Chief Minister put the blame squarely on the Muslim leadership of the State. "Some fundamentalist Muslims who have come to occupy important posts in the party are the ones who have done nothing except exploiting the Congress. Several of these leaders have direct links with anti-social elements. Also, investigations into the latest narcotics seizure in Borach indicate that the couple found with heroin worth crores of rupees had connections with some bigwig. A Maruti car found

has been registered in Delhi. I do not want to go into the details, but if proper investigations are done, much more can come out.”

The fact that Muslim leaders are irked with his views and AICC general-secretary Ahmed Patel expressed tacit displeasure by ensuring Mr. Amarsingh Chaudhary’s election as the CLP leader does not seem to bother Mr. Mehta. Immediately after the rout in the elections, Mr. Mehta had, in a fax message to Mr. Narasimha Rao, held that the appeasement of the minority was what cost them the State. “Isn’t that what has exactly happened in Gujarat? We lost the majority vote and the minority as such has stopped voting for us even after so much of appeasement.”

Regarding the allegations that he was holding the banner of majority communalism and also, on the demand for his suspension, he said: “The Muslim leaders’ displeasure with me is not a new phenomenon. But that does not mean I will change my views. Some Muslim leaders are just waiting for a chance. Every time I say something about the appeasement policy, they get their people rush to the PCC headquarters and demand my suspension. I am not scared of these leaders. If they want to suspend me tomorrow, let them do it today. I’m not bothered. There is no ban in the Congress for expressing one’s views. I stand by my views.”

He is not against the Muslims, he clarified. “I am against the appeasement of a particular community. Why special welfare schemes only for the Muslims?”

12. Advani allays minorities fears⁹²

HT Correspondent

The Hindustan Times
New Delhi, 4 June 1995

NEW DELHI, June 3 - In his first wide-ranging television interview on the attitude and policies of the BJP if it were to form a government after the next elections, Mr. L.K. Advani has said that it will be his responsibility to allay the fears of the minorities. Predicting better relations with Pakistan, the BJP President also promised a tougher Kashmir policy *without kid gloves*. Mr. Advani promised to abrogate Article 370 *as swiftly as rapidly as possible* and said his government would revoke any political concession made to Kashmir along the lines of Prime Minister Rao's recent statement in the Lok Sabha. But the BJP president went out of his way to remove doubts created by his senior party members regarding the BJP's attitude to foreign investment.

In an interview to Eyewitness, a Doordarshan current affairs programme, to be broadcast on Sunday June 4 at 10.00 p.m. on the Metro Channel, Mr. Advani was asked whether a future BJP government would seek to allay the fears of the minorities. He replied: "Certainly it is my responsibility and it is the responsibility of the party and more specifically of the heads of government where we are ruling today. All BJP governments have issued instructions to their administration etc. to ensure that every citizen living in that State is treated equal with justice".

Asked if he would be prepared to extend his statement that the mosques in Varanasi and Mathura were not on the BJP's agenda into a guarantee that the BJP would respect their present status for all time to come, Mr. Advani declined to do so. "You are suggesting something which I have to discuss with my party colleagues. You are suggesting something which I cannot do. I need not do it. I don't want to say anything about the party and what it might do tomorrow and what it might not do. Every party has a right to review all situations."

Again, when asked if he would be prepared to put some distance between the BJP party and associations like the VHP and Bajrang Dal as a way of gaining the confidence of the minorities, Mr. Advani strenuously declined: "Certainly not. I see not reason to do that. Absolutely no reason."

Finally, when told that in the eyes of the minorities his party's attitude to illegal Muslim immigrants suggested not so much a concern with illegal immigrants as with the fact that they are Muslim, Mr. Advani said: "I am against illegal immigrants but I also realise that India in the circumstances in which it accepted partition has a responsibility towards Hindus who were left behind in Pakistan

⁹² Minority fears in India are imaginary and a concoction of the secularist cult. What needs allaying is the majority fear that it will no longer be tormented by Islamic gangsterism.

and who subsequently are a part of Bangladesh. Illegal immigration is wrong but I do draw a distinction between illegal immigration and people who are forced to flee a country as refugees because of partition. Muslims are not refugees. They may be coming here for economic reasons which no country in the world allows, not even America which is very prosperous.”

When pointed out that his qualifications had effectively undermined his initial assurance to the minorities and that now it would seem that under the surface he was a lot less re-assuring, Mr. Advani accepted the charge and said: “This is because the kind of reassurance you want would be possible only if you would expect me to disown whatever I have been saying or whatever really makes me distinct from the other parties and at least for the BJP, for the sake of minority votes which would come about after the kind of reassurance you think I should give, it is not going to compromise with its basic stands.”

So when asked if this meant he really was the *Rakshas* some people took him to be, Mr. Advani replied: “If you believe that the BJP is Rakshas, then L.K. Advani has contributed most to making BJP what it is”.

Mr. Advani made clear that its policy would be *tough and consistent and without ambivalence*, on Kashmir.

“My attitude is that today in Jammu and Kashmir if we are waging a proxy war let us wage a proxy war. It cannot be fought with kid gloves. If there are militants who are acting as foreign mercenaries on behalf of Pakistan you cannot be dealing with them and talking of making concessions to them and having a political settlement with them. I don’t understand this. Just as in Punjab militancy came to an end not by holding elections but by giving some measure of freedom to the security forces headed by K.P.S. Gill and then holding elections, I envisage that there should be no compromise with militancy and terrorism. Our policy will be not merely tougher but also more consistent. You cannot be ambivalent on these issues.”

13. One country, one people - Secret of BJP's success

by K.R. Malkani

Indian Express
New Delhi, 27 July 1995

Only a year ago when the BJP did not get as many seats in UP, MP and Himachal Pradesh as expected, many people thought that the party had passed its peak. Not many of them paused to consider that even in its reduced state the party had polled one crore votes more - and won a hundred seats more - than the Congress. And so now the same people find that the party has not only peaked higher than ever before, it is poised to attain even bigger heights.

Today the BJP is not only in power in Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra, it is the main Opposition in Karnataka and Bihar where it has pushed the Congress to the third position. Its masterstroke in UP has not only toppled its sworn enemy in that biggest of States, its support for a Dalit woman as Chief Minister has at once endeared it to millions of Dalits and millions of women voters. The Hindi Press has said: **Rama has appointed Shabari as king.**

In this situation all other parties view the BJP as the first party in the country. Frantic efforts are being made to checkmate this meteoric rise of the BJP. As a Janata Dal MP put it humorously: "The party of Rama is the only party standing firmly on its two feet; all other parties are there on Ram Bharosey." Even Mr. Nripen Chakravarty, former Marxist Chief Minister of Tripura, has said that the next election will be won by the BJP.

What is the reason for this steady rise of the BJP? Two of the more popular theories are that alliance with Mr. V.P. Singh's Janata Dal in 1989 helped the party to jump from two seat to 89 - and that the Ayodhya issue helped the party in 1991 to further increase its strength from 89 to 119. These theories are at best half-truths.

It should not be forgotten that in 1977, the BJP had won almost a hundred seats. Although in 1984 it got a pathetic two seats - thanks to the sympathy wave in favour of Rajiv Gandhi - its popular vote of more than seven percentage points put it ahead of all other opposition parties. Under a system of proportional representation this would have got it something like 40 seats.

It is true enough that adjustment with the Janata Dal over the Bofors issue, etc. helped the BJP in 1989; but it is no less true that adjustment with the BJP helped JD to form the Government. It was a mutually beneficial arrangement. As for the Ayodhya issue, the BJP took it up early in 1989 out of innate conviction and not on electoral calculation. The issue did help the party in 1991 - particularly in UP. But even this was due more to the excesses of the then UP Government which had shocked the masses than to the espousal of the Ayodhya issue as such.

However, Ayodhya was not much of an issue in the recent elections in Bihar and Karnataka, Gujarat and Maharashtra, and yet the BJP performed there very well. Serious students of public affairs, therefore, will have to look deeper for the basic causes of the rise of the BJP than Bofors or Ayodhya. These reasons go deep into political philosophy.

Today the BJP is the only Indian party that has a philosophy, the philosophy of nationalism - the philosophy of commitment to **Our Country and Our People**. There was a time when the Congress had a philosophy; it was Gandhism before 1947 and Nehruism after 1947. Today the Congress is neither Gandhian nor Nehruite; it is IMF-World Bankite. And this is not going to cut any ice with the Indian people.

The communists also had a philosophy once. But with the collapse of communism all over the world, it has fallen flat on its face. Had the communists Indianised Marxist theory - as Mao Sinoized it in China and Ho Chi Minh nationalised it in Vietnam - they could have had some hope. But having failed to do that, they do not have any credible ideology to move the masses.

The Janata Dal in its many splinters also has a philosophy; but it is a philosophy of one set of castes against another. It is not a philosophy that can inspire or elevate; it can only divide, irritate and alienate. It is, therefore, not a *philosophy* - which word, literally and etymologically, means, love of wisdom - but something of an anti-philosophy.

It will be argued that if the JD pits castes against castes, does not BJP pit community against community? The answer would be - yes and no. There is no doubt that some people in the Sangh Parivar are allergic to Muslims. Apart from the baggage of history - which we all carry in varying degrees - the main reason for this was the Muslim demand for the partition of India. The RSS had been in existence since 1925, but not even one in a thousand Hindus had heard of it, until after the League passed the Partition Resolution in March 1940. It was a case of action and reaction being equal and opposite. As and when India-Pakistan problems are sorted out - and a BJP Government can certainly sort them out better and sooner than any other Government - the Hindu-Muslim problem also will no doubt sort itself out.

Also nobody need be allergic to Hindutva. Every society has to have a cement, a glue, an identity that will hold it together. China finds it in the *Han race*. Russia finds it in the *Slav race*. Britain finds it in the *Church of England*. The US finds it in the *market economy*. India is held together by our culture - call it Hindu, Indian, Bharatiya or whatever. It is this cultural commonality that keeps Assam and Gujarat and Punjab and Tamil Nadu together in one State.

To emphasise Hindutva is to emphasise this national commonality for national unity. To see it as *Hindu* challenge to *Muslims* is a recent and passing phenomenon. Sir Syed Ahmed of Aligarh education movement fame proudly called himself **Hindu**. And so did a Muslim leader like M.C. Chagla, a Christian leader like Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur and a Parsi leader like A.D. Gorwala. Even the Jamaat-i-Islami organ Radiance wrote on March 1, 1970: "Muslims can quite reasonably claim to be Hindus in the geographical sense." And Iqbal himself hailed Rama as the Prophet of Hindustan

when he wrote: “*Hai Ram ke wujud pe Hindustan ko naaz / Ahl-e-watan samajhte hein usse, Imam-e-Hind.*”

It must be clearly understood that whatever the differentiation, Hindus and Muslims are One People, One Nation. The solution to their problems lies in an elaboration and implementation of the ideology of nationalism - and not in communalism, casteism or classism. Once this allergy to Hindutva is over, what is dubbed today as *Hindu nationalism* will be seen as nationalism pure and simple. All BJP programmes - whether it is support to Swadeshi and Swabhasha, missile defence and food security, full employment and small-scale industry, or opposition to exploitation masquerading as *liberalisation*, and neo-colonialism masquerading as *globalisation* - are meant to protect and promote the interest of the whole country and of all our people. Herein lies the strength of the BJP’s appeal. It is this foundation of nationalism that has made BJP unstoppable.

As the French historian Ameury de Reincourt has noted in his *The Soul of India*: “Like every old civilisation still represented on this globe, India has been, and is, increasingly, in spite of appearances, returning to its original sources.” It is, he said, “from the depths of that old civilisation that India is most likely to draw the strength needed to adapt itself to the modern world.” And he added: “Indian masses will give their heartfelt allegiance to that party and ideology that appears to be a true emanation, more or less modernised no doubt, of some aspect or other of timeless Hinduism.” It was **Gandhism yesterday** and, he said, it can only be the **redoubtable RSS** tomorrow.

That is the reality of the Indian situation today - and the secret of the BJP’s strength.

14. Advani woos Indian expatriates in London, assails Govt's Kashmir policy

by L.K. Sharma

The Hindustan Times
New Delhi, 24 August 1995

LONDON, August 23 - Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president L.K. Advani criticised the Rao government's Kashmir policy, promised a tougher approach if his party came to power and urged the Indian community in Britain to counter the lobbying by the Pakistanis.

He sought to mobilise the Indian community at a meeting organised by the *Overseas Friends of the BJP* and said that there could be no dialogue with terrorists. A BJP government would "scrap Kashmir's constitutional status and recover the third of the state's territory under illegal Pakistani occupation."

In his two-hour long address at a packed Brent town hall, Mr. Advani objected to British media's description of BJP as a **right-wing Hindu fundamentalist party** and argued at length that his party was no such thing. He said the BJP was ahead of everyone in the race for the next parliamentary elections.

Mr. Advani's statements gave a preview of the BJP's election strategy which will focus on criminalisation of politics, corruption and the need to emulate Japanese economic nationalism. His description of the ghastly *tandoor murder* evoked considerable laughter.

The BJP leader returned to the theme of the *liberal Hindu tradition* for the second day in an attempt to remove the misgivings of the minorities as well as of secular and devout Hindus who had rebelled against the lumpenisation of the Hindu psyche at the time of the demolition of the Ayodhya mosque. The latter harbour reservations about guided conservatism and any centralised control of the Hindu way of life that may be attempted by a cadre-based party. Mr. Advani's statements indicated that the BJP will seek to attract new followers by projecting a gentler face of the main organisation while the front organisations continue to consolidate the Hindu vote through religious rabble-rousing.

Mr. Advani shunned stridency and traced the source of his own temple activism to such Congress veterans as Sardar Patel and K.M. Munshi who wrote **Jai Somnath**. The BJP leader underpinned the party's cultural nationalism and political nationalism with his admiration for Swami Vivekanand, Sardar Patel and Shamaldas Gandhi, recording his admiration for a strand of his Congress.

Mr. Advani's message was directed at those who want to *malign* the BJP but on occasions, the friends of the BJP president in Britain were caught in momentary confusion. Mr. Advani declared that when Pakistan became a theocratic state, no country in the world would have minded had India followed the same path. The audience interrupted the speaker with an applause, mistaking his intent. Mr. Advani resumed with a *but* and went on to say that he, as a *thinker*, would not have liked India to become a theocratic state because theocracy was alien to India's tradition, its legacy and its culture. Having now given the message right, the audience gave a fresh and louder applause to supersede the earlier ill-timed gesture.

Mr. Advani recalled that he had disapproved of the slogan raised in the party: *Jo Hindu hit ki bat karega, wohi desh pe raj karega*. The BJP government would be for all and not for just the Hindu majority, he said.⁹³

Mr. Advani said he had challenged the BBC to show anything in the BJP manifesto that validated their description of the BJP as a *right-wing Hindu fundamentalist party*. In European terms, it was Mr. Manmohan Singh who was the most right-wing finance minister, he said. He said the BJP was a secular party but it was against pseudo-secularists. "I have been telling our Muslim friends, do not see us through the tinted glasses of our critics. Judge, us by our track record," he said. The BJP governments in states took all administrative steps to prevent riots. They offered security and justice to every citizen without any discrimination.

⁹³ A year earlier, Mr. Advani had rebuked a Hindu audience in India for raising the same slogan. He had advised them to say instead, "*Jo sab ke hit ki bat karega, wohi desh par raj karega*". This substitute slogan had been noticed by Abhas Chatterjee, and provided the theme of his lecture, *Hindū Rāshtra Kī AvadhāraNā*, delivered in Calcutta on 31 July 1994. This lecture was translated by him into English and published by Voice of India in 1995 under the title, *The Concept of Hindu Nation*. The original lecture in Hindi has also been published in 1997. This business of treating Hindus as merely a majority community and as less than the nation itself, had been started by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in 1886, and has now been bought by the BJP.

15. BJP bid to woo Muslims

The Times of India News Service

The Times of India
New Delhi, 16 October, 1995

ALIGARH, October 15 - The BJP today kicked off its pre-election campaign to woo Muslim voters by promising to provide *a riot-free India in which human rights of all sections would be protected.*

Addressing the first state convention of the newly-formed minority front of the BJP, former national president of the party Murli Manohar Joshi urged Muslims to take a *fresh look* at the BJP, if they wished to escape from the clutches of the Congress, which he alleged had been *exploiting them over the past several decades.*

The proceedings of the convention began with a recitation from the holy Quran. Mr. Joshi said the British had sown the seeds of a *minority complex* in the minds of the Muslims. Later the Congress had exploited this *complex* by whipping up a *fear psychosis* against the BJP, he alleged.

Mr. Joshi said the history of India was replete with instances which clearly indicated that Muslims had always been **an integral part of the national mainstream.** "They have now only to be made conscious of their genuine role in this mainstream," he added.⁹⁴

Mr. Joshi and other senior BJP leaders, including former chief minister Kalyan Singh, state BJP president Kalraj Mishra and party's national secretary Arif Baig, stressed that the BJP was now offering a more liberal form of Hindutva as its main election plank. They also claimed that the BJP's economic policies would *protect the economic interests of the weaker sections of society including minorities.*

Mr. Baig, who is also the national president of the BJP's minority front, announced that in the next few months similar conventions would be held all over the country.

Though well-attended, the percentage of various minority communities among the participants was *much below* the expectations of the organisers. A local Muslim leader felt: "By making such a move, the BJP may not be able to actually fetch Muslim votes, but it could certainly succeed in blunting the **anti-BJP** image amongst Muslims."

⁹⁴ Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi excels K.R. Malkani when it comes to inventing convenient history - convenient, that is, for catching Muslim votes. Unfortunately for him, however, Muslims happen to know their own history much better, and refuse to be hoodwinked by fools or crooks.

16. How can any Muslim in this country say that he does not respect Ram?

The Sunday Observer
New Delhi, November 19-25, 1995

(We reproduce some of the questions and answers in an interview given by Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi in Bombay to two journalists from the weekly, Rajeev D. Pai and Firdaus Ashraf, on 13 November 1995.)

Why has the BJP now relegated the temple issue to the backburner?

It's there. It's in our manifesto.

Yes, but not so prominent as Kashmir.

You see, every problem is related to the other. Sometimes some problem is at the fore, sometimes some (other). Sometimes you are dining, sometimes you are bathing. Now you say that why are you bathing now and why are you not eating? But I am happy that you are becoming Ram bhakts, and you remember the temple. It's a good sign.

What is the party's stand on Varanasi and Mathura?

We have said they are not on our agenda.

At the moment?

No, we have said they are not on our agenda. We are the BJP today - after 30 years, when I am no more, I don't know what will this country do. How can one predict so long? - We are at the helm of affairs, we are saying, we have said it very clearly, that it is not on our agenda.

Will the Ram temple be built immediately if you come to power?

We have our own strategy for it. We have always said we will build it through a legal process. There has been an acquisition (of the land) and cases are pending in the Supreme Court. We have to make a statute for it.

But the matter was in court even before December 6, 1992.

We had always said we will pass a law. The BJP resolution has always been either through mutual consent or by legislation, but not through litigation.

Will the legislation cover other disputed shrines?

We have said legislation for Ram temple.

Only?

Yes.

And how do you see the Muslims reacting to this?

Muslims in India, they don't worship Ram as a god, but they consider him their hero. How can any Muslim in this country say Ram does not belong to this country or that he does not respect Ram? Even Iqbal said he is Imam-i-Hind.

Every Indian shares the heritage of Shri Ram. It is one of the monumental blunders of Indian political leaders to tell Indian Muslims that they have no relation with Ram and they have relations with Babar.⁹⁵

But it was the BJP which called them *Babar ki aulad*.

We never say that. We always say, I as president of the party have said it categorically, and I repeat it, that every Indian shares the heritage of (the country), right from the Vedas down to today.

Muslims are part and parcel of the great Indian heritage. I do not consider them as minorities. The biggest blunder which has been committed by politicians, and which Muslims have accepted, is that they are minorities.

How will you erase this perception?

By changing so many things, the education system. Pakistan celebrates Panini's anniversary. But they don't speak Sanskrit. Still they share the heritage of Panini.

Why do we have a problem here then?

Because Indian politicians, particularly Congressmen, have told them that this does not belong to you. We will tell them that this belongs as much to you as to anybody else.

On October 12, I addressed a conference of our minority cell, in Aligarh, right on the doorstep of Aligarh University. I said here is an institution which spread this concept, that Muslims are a different nation. I am here again to say that they are not. They are part and parcel of this great nation, they are Mohammediya Hindus.⁹⁶

But then why are Muslims suspicious of the BJP? They still prefer the Samajwadi Party.

They will never prefer it. I tell you. Large numbers of Muslims have realised that a serious mistake has been committed by their leaders.

So what percentage of Muslim votes do you expect this time?

It's not a question of what percentage of votes I expect. Anybody can join any party. But I am more interested in (making) Muslims consider themselves part and parcel of this great national heritage, that they do not consider themselves minorities; they can vote for any party. Even after that they

⁹⁵ Dr. Joshi is blaming poor politicians instead of blaming the real culprit - Islam - which does not permit Muslims to respect anything from the pre-Islamic period of history in any country.

⁹⁶ This attempt to paste on Muslims a label which Islam does not permit them to accept and which Muslims have always rejected with utter contempt, is not only foolish but also betrays a fascist attitude. In any case, Joshi should have known that Lala Har Dayal who had coined the phrase *Mohammedi Hindus* for Muslims in India, had admitted later on that it was *my pious folly* to say so. Muslims in India have always looked down with contempt on this sort of Hindu semantics. It is high time for our Joshis to stop fooling themselves with what they consider to be clever attempts at fooling others.

may not vote for me. So what? Many people don't vote for me. But they are part and parcel of this country.

17. Malhotra's statement on Ayodhya annoys Chavan by Express News Service

Indian Express
New Delhi, 21 November 1995

NEW DELHI, November 20 - The demolition of the disputed Ayodhya structure once again created ripples in the meeting of Parliament's Consultative Committee attached to the Home Ministry here today.

The Bharatiya Janata Party MP, Mr. Vijay Kumar Malhotra, asserted that he regarded the demolition of the disputed structure as a matter of national pride. This elicited a sharp, albeit belated, reaction from the Home Minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, who warned that if some forces were determined to say that they took pride in the demolition of religious places, the Government was equally determined to see that these forces did not succeed. Mr. Malhotra intervened after some members, including Mr. Somnath Chatterjee (CPI-M) and Mr. Makhan Lal Fotedar (breakaway Congress faction), described the demolition as a national shame.⁹⁷

Mr. Fotedar was critical of the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao. He stated that Mr. Rao should have owned up the responsibility for the demolition, resigned and apologised to the nation. At this juncture, the Congress members, Mr. Pawan Kumar Bansal, and Mr. V. Narayanaswamy, joined the issue with Mr. Fotedar and told him he was no less responsible for lapse, if any, as he was a member of the Union Cabinet at that time!

Mr. Malhotra's intervention took Mr. Chavan by surprise. The Home Minister asked Mr. Malhotra whether he believed what he had said. The BJP member said that he stood by his assertion as, in his view, a symbol of national slavery had been erased. The Home Minister reserved his warning that the forces out to destroy the religious places would not be allowed to succeed for his concluding remarks. Mr. Malhotra had gone away by then.

Interestingly, the BJP chief, Mr. L.K. Advani, and his senior party colleague, Mr. Sikander Bakht, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, both were not present when Mr. Malhotra made his remark. Mr. Advani put in a brief appearance and did not speak at all!

The meeting was called to discuss the latest situation in Varanasi arising out of the Gyanvapi mosque-Vishwanath Temple dispute and the general communal scenario in the country.

⁹⁷ Vijay Kumar Malhotra is certainly a brave man who has had the courage to say publicly what most people in the Sangh Parivar, except the likes of Atal Behari Vajpayee, believe and say privately.

18. BJP bid to win over Muslims

by Gautam Chaudhuri

The Hindustan Times,
New Delhi, 16 August 1996

CALCUTTA, Aug. 15 - Desperately seeking ways to make inroads into the minority vote bank in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP has set up a core group of six Muslim leaders, who have been asked to concentrate on the minority pockets in UP before the forthcoming Assembly elections, in order to woo the Muslims to give bigger support to the BJP.

The group will be led by the BJP minority panel president, Mr. Izaz Rezvi. Realising that without a convincing support from the minorities, which is now being monopolised by the Samajwadi Party and the Congress-Bahujan Samaj Party combine, it may not be a smooth sailing for the party in the UP Assembly poll, the group has been asked to hold regular interactions with the minorities to remove their misconceptions about the BJP.

While party stalwarts, led by the former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, are now involved in attempts to win the confidence of the minorities, the core group of the minority panel has been asked to establish direct links with the rank and file in each minority pocket by paying regular visits to the Muslim-dominated areas before the poll.

At the same time, they would also make similar efforts to forge easy communication links with the minority mass in other parts of the country as well, though UP remains the first priority.

The focus of the campaign would be that the issue before the Muslims should not be Babri but of *barabari* (equality). Apart from encouraging debates and free exchange of views on the issue, the BJP also seeks to highlight the glorious role of the Muslims in the country's Independence movement and subsequently during the Indo-Pak war, with the valiant Muslim freedom fighters and those who had laid down their lives for the country in the wars like Havildar Abdul Hamid to occupy the pride of place in this regard.⁹⁸

Also to be brought in focus would be the contribution of the minorities to usher in speedy development in the country in all arenas. All these are meant only to reaffirm the party's faith in minorities and vice-versa so that they do not remain isolated from the BJP in the coming days.

The issue has been accorded top priority because according to party calculations, even with the Opposition divided between the BSP-Congress combine and the Samajwadi Party-led United Front,

⁹⁸ The Indian National Congress had also invented heroes like Siraj-ud-Daulah and Mir Qasim of Bengal, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore, and Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal *emperor*. But this exercise in converting villains into heroes did not help in rallying Muslims round the Congress. Inventing history is not only morally wrong, but also self-defeating. Those who are out to deceive others end by deceiving themselves.

the party does not feel entirely assured of a sweeping victory with its 33 per cent share of votes in UP.

It has also become very important in political terms because only a convincing win in UP Assembly elections is expected to pave the way for an early exit of the United Front Government at the Centre and realignment of political forces, with the BJP at the helm of affairs.

In the political resolution adopted at the recently-held national executive meeting of the BJP minority panel, the Congress and its *satellite parties* like the Samajwadi Party, Janata Dal and the communist parties were held responsible for keeping alive the *poison of separatism* in some sections of Muslims.

“All Muslims and Hindus of India are Indians, their religions may be different, but their nation is one”, said the resolution. The panel upheld the BJP’s demand for a uniform civil code to strengthen the **Indianness** of Hindus and Muslims in the country and setting aside the Article 370 of the Constitution.

19. RSS wants Muslims for friends

by Deepali Nandwani

The Sunday Observer
New Delhi, 18-24 August 1996

The fiery Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is on a friendship mission. And the target is none other than its **erstwhile enemy**, the Muslim community.

The RSS functionaries, sources say, are now meeting Muslim leaders to *get itself rid of the fascist tag* - just last week the top brass led by deputy general secretary K.S. Sudarshan conducted heart-to-heart talks with the Muslim leaders.

Interestingly, the meeting (marked with some acrimony from both the sides) was held at the south Mumbai office of the Urdu newspaper, Akhbare-Alam. Former Mumbai RSS secretary Ramesh Patange, Dr. U. Undre and Sudarshan represented the Sangh Parivar, while the Anjuman-e-Islam Trust chairman Ishaq Jamkhanawala, Akhbar-e-Alam editor Khalil Zhahid, Muslim League president G. M. Banatwala and Dr. Jamil Kamil of Maharashtra College were there from the Muslim side.

Contentious issues like the Babri Masjid, uniform civil code, recurring communal riots, deteriorating socio-economic conditions of Muslims, distribution of provocative pamphlets by the Sangh Parivar during the pre and post-Ayodhya riots period, as well as the prevailing gun culture in Kashmir were discussed threadbare.

“We have to understand that Muslims will continue living in India without converting. And since they are such a vast community, they obviously cannot be ignored,” Pantage said.

The RSS wanted to get rid of the hostility and mistrust that marks the Hindu-Muslim relation today. The media, he claimed, has contributed substantially to this by portraying the RSS and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad as fascist and fundamentalist organizations. “We are a very disciplined organization with a commitment to social causes. The Muslims too are victims of the mischievous propaganda of the press,” he said.

Zhahid concurred, and added that the differences between the two have reached hysterical proportions. “It is time we sat down and debated issues amicably, instead of accusing each other of being communalists,” he said.

Confirming that a meeting attended by more than 100 Muslim leaders and intellectuals had taken

place, Bharatiya Janata Party general secretary Pramod Mahajan said the idea was to find out the reasons for the lack of trust between the two communities, remove their fear psychosis and strive to establish *brotherly relations* with *the bona fide citizens of the country*. He added that Mumbai was chosen as the venue for obvious reasons.

However, the Muslim leaders are yet to get over their bitterness. “The RSS and the BJP think Muslims have been appeased by the Congress, but the reality is just the opposite. Only 1.5 per cent Muslims are in government services. The standards of living in Muslim-dominated localities are declining every day,” Zhahaid said. “If Muslims want to progress they will have to join hands with the Hindus.”

“Stalemate over issues like the uniform civil code can only be solved by mutual discussions,” said Samajwadi Party office-bearer I.S. Qasim. “Muslims are a little rigid about religion. They feel the BJP is trying to impose Hindu laws on them. What we can do is debate the issue and reach an agreement.”

The Muslim leaders, however, admit that there will be a lot of resistance to the idea. “Enough blood has already been shed,” said Banatwala, “We will not let the saboteurs succeed.”

While leaders of the two communities are optimistic that such non-political contacts will help bridge the chasm between them, others are not at all convinced. Janata Dal worker Nadeera Sheikh scoffed, “Do you think such talks can solve the monumental differences between the two? Until the socio-economic conditions of Muslims improve and they are brought on par with other communities, the differences will remain.”

Mumbai trader Salim Khan agreed, “We are a mere vote bank for both Hindu and Muslim leaders to exploit. It is in their interest that the two communities remain polarized.”

Syed Mir Saif, jewellery trader of Dariba Kalan in Chandni Chowk, pointed out, “Our politics is different from the Hindus. Where do the twain meet for us to hold talks?” Government school teacher Mohammad Ali Khan was even more forthright. “How can a leopard change its spots?” he asked.

A senior professor of Jamia Millia University, however, welcomed the talks. Requesting anonymity, he said, “If the RSS is serious about the talks, it means they have realized they cannot come to power on a jingoistic agenda.”

Despite general scepticism in the community, RSS and Muslim leaders are determined to hold more dialogues. RSS sources confirm that Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are next on the list. Efforts are on to arrange a closed-door meeting with the Muslim community in the Capital.

The peaceful conduct of *jalabbishek* by the Shiv Sena at Varanasi without any rabble-rousing by the

RSS or the VHP is also seen as an indicator of the changed social and political agenda of the Parivar.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ The Sangh Parivar leadership refuses to learn the one worthwhile lesson from a long stretch of history, namely, that so long as Hindus remain Hindus, howsoever soft, and Muslims remain Muslims, howsoever liberal, Hindu-Muslim relations are bound to remain what they have been since the advent of Islam in this country. The deep gulf which divides the two communities - one indigenous and the other self-alienated - cannot be bridged by any amount of wishful thinking.

20. Babri or ‘Barabari’?

Sudheendra Kulkarni on Muslims’ choice

The Hindustan Times
New Delhi, 19 August 1996

Two Prime Ministers, one present and the other his immediate predecessor, have last week made statements about Indian Muslims which, despite the sharp differences in their political ideologies, reveal a remarkable commonality of observation. H.D. Deve Gowda, in an interview given to a major Hindi daily, has stated that “the socio-economic conditions of Muslims in some parts of the country are worse than those of Dalits.” Earlier in the week, addressing a meeting of the Minorities Morcha of the BJP in the Capital, Atal Behari Vajpayee observed that the real issue before Indian Muslims was **not Babri but Barabari** (equality).¹⁰⁰ Implicit in this remark is the admission that a majority of Muslims in India are, indeed, victims of inequity.

It is not that what Deve Gowda and Vajpayee have said is not already known to the rest of us. It is sufficient to take a walk through the dilapidated lanes and bylanes of Bombay’s Bhendi Bazaar, which was a proud address for the city’s Muslims only fifty years ago, or visit the awfully unhygienic tanneries of Kanpur, to know how millions of ordinary Muslims live in this country.

Unemployment is high, nutritional standards are low, educational facilities are few, housing conditions are shocking; middle and even upper class Muslims find it difficult to get houses on rent; loans and assistance from official sources are hard to come by, and the government machinery (irrespective of which is the ruling party in the state) is unresponsive - such is the woe of common Muslims today.

By no means are Muslims the only victims of such wretched conditions. These are the lot of the poor of all castes and communities. But, in the case of Muslims, they carry a peculiar poignancy - and it is in this context that the uncharacteristically candid statements of two of our important politicians assume significance. It is also in this context that the leaders and intellectuals of Indian Muslims should self-critically analyse why their community’s plight has an added layer of inequity and ask themselves the question: “Is it largely because of our own, or our past leaders’, strategic mistakes and missteps? If so, shouldn’t we take corrective steps at least now, when the problem of the present is so stark that it cannot be wished away either by harking back to the past glory of Muslim rule or dreaming about the future promise of Dar-ul-Islam?”

A compelling occasion for Muslim introspection is provided by the 50th year of India’s

¹⁰⁰ Playing with words, flying into poetic fancies, and clowning on public platforms have helped Atal Behari Vajpayee to become a crowd-puller and the Big Brother of the BJP if not of the Sangh Parivar as a whole (The latest report about Vajpayee playing with words is provided by *The Hindustan Times, New Delhi*, 13 June 1997: “Addressing an impressive *Gujjar rally* held today [June 12], he [Kanshi Ram] said that the former Prime Minister Vajpayee had called him Shiv in response to his terming the BJP as a cobra.) If Vajpayee had not swallowed the slogans of Nehruvian Secularism and cared to have a close look at ground realities, he could have seen quite clearly that Muslims in India have been, in George Orwell’s famous words, “**more equal than others**” ever since Vajpayee’s mentor and model, Jawaharlal Nehru, emerged dominant on the Indian scene. In any case, who told Vajpayee that Muslims would be satisfied if they got barabari? What Muslims have strived for, always and everywhere, is total dominance.

independence, if for no other reason than the fact that the costliest Muslim misstep is anchored in the epochal event - partition of India - which took place in 1947. The two-nation theory has brought Islamic glory of the most questionable kind to Muslims in Pakistan and Bangladesh. But to Muslims in India it has brought something worse: it has created a lingering distrust in the minds of Hindus which transcends their party or caste affiliations. This distrust has not disappeared in the past five decades, but assumed darker shades on account of further missteps by the dominant Muslim leadership. And, let us face it, it is this distrust which manifests itself in many ugly and unjustifiable ways to produce that added layer of inequity mentioned earlier.

One of the major Muslim missteps in post-independence India has been the stand of the community's vocal leaders on the Ayodhya issue. This issue, as also the folly Muslim leaders have committed and are continuing to commit in this matter, is intrinsically linked to the earlier strategic blunder: the two-nation theory. This linkage has been deliberately overlooked by our ultra-secularists in their voluminous and vituperative condemnation of the demand for reconstructing the Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya. The basis of the two-nation theory, as elucidated in the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League in 1940 and as tirelessly articulated by Mohammed Ali Jinnah in his later years, was this: "Notwithstanding thousand years of close contact, there is nothing common between Muslims and Hindus spiritually, culturally, socially, linguistically or in their perception of their separate national destinies." Such a formulation of Muslim self-identity did not leave any room for Indian Muslims to identify themselves with, and to take pride in, the pre-Islamic and non-Islamic culture and heritage of the land. Indeed, advocates of the two-nation theory could derive legitimacy for their demand for India's partition only by totally disowning this heritage.

Now, isn't the Muslim leaders' vociferous opposition to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement also premised on their refusal to identify themselves with, and to take pride in, India's pre-Islamic and non-Islamic heritage? Even lesser considerations of forging good-neighbourly relations with Hindus would mandate that Muslims respect the sentiments of the majority community and pave the way for the temple by agreeing to relocate the Babri Mosque. The refusal to take this sensible course, coupled with the false hope that non-BJP governments at the Centre and in Lucknow would implement the Muslim demand in the matter, complicated the issue to the extent of precipitating a major confrontation. The unfortunate and undesirable outcome of this confrontation is too well-known to bear description here.¹⁰¹

But there has been yet another dimension of this outcome which is relevant to our present analysis. The stalemate over Ayodhya has deepened the Hindu distrust towards their Muslim brethren. This, in turn, has further complicated ordinary Muslims' legitimate search for socio-economic equity and advancement. Muslim leaders and their ultra-secularist non-Muslim supporters would be deceiving themselves if they thought this to be true only in the states ruled by the **communal-fascist** BJP. The fact is, this is more or less the sad case in almost all the states, including those where the BJP is weak and which have long been under Congress or Janata rule.

¹⁰¹ Kulkarni is an excellent illustration of Mirza Ghalib's famous couplet which may be rendered as follows in English: "*There is no dearth of dunderheads in the world, O Ghalib. If we go in search of one, we run into thousands (of them).*" One wonders why these wise guys refuse to study the doctrine of Islam and discover the key to Muslim attitudes and behaviour.

Equally futile and self-deluding would be the Muslim leaders' hope that one or the other non-BJP governing combination at the Centre would some day rebuild the Babri Mosque at the same spot. Short of converting India into a Muslim majority land, no power or ploy on earth can make it happen. This much should be obvious even from the fact that, not a single non-BJP party has pledged in its manifesto to rebuild the demolished structure. Look how P.V. Narasimha Rao has stopped reiterating the famous line. "What has been destroyed will be rebuilt" - ever since he uttered it, only once, in his 1993 Independence Day speech. Look how Taslimuddin was upbraided by his own partymen for publicly voicing the demand of many Muslim leaders that the idols of Ram Lalla be removed from the make-shift temple in Ayodhya. Look how the United Front is back-tracking on its own key promise in the Common Minimum Programme about referring the Ayodhya matter to the Supreme Court under Article 138(A) of the Constitution, instead of Article 143. And look, also, how the Congress president has openly ridiculed the UF for trying to change the terms of reference, even though his own government's reference under Article 143 had been rejected by the apex court.

Do Muslim leaders really believe that all this unprincipled hide-and-seek in legalism would bring back the Babri Mosque at the spot where it stood? They must realise at least now that, at its heart, the Ayodhya issue is neither legal nor even political. Its solution will, hence, defy both legalism and electoral politicking. Ayodhya has to do with India's conception of its own nationhood. It is not too late even now. Muslim leaders have an opportunity to learn from their past mistakes and make themselves and their community equal partners in nation-building. Let them come forward to remove all hurdles in the way of building the Ram Temple. This decisive gesture of goodwill-generation will certainly meet with even more decisive reciprocatory gestures from Hindu community. Together, the two gestures will de-communalise and de-politicise the matter once and for all. This, in turn, will herald a new phase of harmonious Hindu-Muslim relations in India, whose beneficial effect will help in the rejuvenation of the whole of the Indian sub-continent. Clearly, both Hindus and Muslims deserve a different historical fate after 50 years of the blood-soaked partition of our common land.

For this well-deserved fate to befall us, however, Muslim leaders must first make their choice: Babri or Barabari?

21. Bihar BJP's first-ever Muslim leader emerges

by HT Correspondent

The Hindustan Times
New Delhi, 31 August 1996

PATNA, Aug. 30 - A growing realisation in the BJP that the support of the minorities may prove crucial to its hopes of ruling the country appears to have set the stage for the emergence of the party's first-ever top ranking Muslim leader in Bihar.

If things work out to a plan, Prof. Azfar Shamshi - State chief of the party's Minority Front for the past three years - may soon be rubbing shoulders with the top brass of the Bihar BJP. Already, the party leadership has been sending out signals that it rates the *ideologically correct* professor rather highly and has high hopes of him.

In fact, if one were to go by the laudatory references of State BJP president Ashwini Kumar and veteran party leader Kailashpati Mishra to Prof. Shamshi's intellectual proficiency and leadership qualities, the 35-year old Munger-based college teacher is expected to play a vital role in allaying Muslim misgivings about the BJP.

Although Prof. Shamshi has been waiting in the wings for quite some time, the unexpected success with which he organised the first ever ideological orientation camp of the BJP Minority Front earlier this week at Madhupur, seems to have impressed the party leadership and catapulted the young leader into the reckoning for greater things.

It would be naive to ascribe a mere coincidence Prof. Shamshi's prominent presence besides Mr. Kailashpati Mishra and Mr. Ashwini Kumar at the Press conference convened at the State BJP headquarters here yesterday to announce the induction into the party, of former Congress MPs C.P. Thakur and Kunwar Ram.

In fact, Mr. Kumar and Mr. Mishra made it a point to ensure that the BJP Minority Front chief shared the limelight with them in almost equal measures and made him answer several of the newsmen's queries directly.

Besides, the shape of things to come is also indicated by the party's claim to having about 40,000 Muslims on its rolls in the State and talk of 3,000 active member delegates attending the Minority Front's first-time State-level convention here in December.

What makes Prof. Shamshi the BJP's man of the hour is that he has impeccable credentials not just

as an adherent but even an exponent of the Sangh Parivar philosophy. A powerful orator, the youthful professor's grasp of the Hindutva ideology is so clear he could put to shame a well trained RSS pracharak.

Drawn towards the Jana Sangh and its allied organisations for their nationalistic views since his early teens, Prof. Shamshi has weathered many a storm blowing from within his community for his political ideas and activities.

On Dec. 6, 1992 - the day the Babri demolition took place - he was present in Ayodhya doing **Rashtra seva** as he calls it and was promptly ostracised by the Muslim community in his home town of Munger. Bombs were thrown at his house, his wedding engagement was broken off and he had to remain underground for over a month to save his life.

However, the community's strong disapproval of Prof. Shamshi's actions metamorphosised into some kind of a reverence for him and his family in 1994 when his father died in Mecca while doing Haj-e-Akbar there and fulfilled the most cherished of Muslim dreams of being buried at the holy city.

"This divine benediction in the best Islamic traditions not only caused my community to accept me back whole-heartedly but even conferred on us something akin to celebrity status," explained the Jamalpur College teacher. Confirmation of this came next year when as BJP nominee for the Munger Town Assembly seat - the only Muslim to be fielded by the party in the 1995 elections - the professor secured about 30,000 votes.

The figures represented the highest number of votes the Jana Sangh or the BJP has secured in an election for this seat since Independence. The Professor dismisses his narrow defeat to factors other than the popular support he had secured and says he lost no sleep over it.

Prof. Shamshi's eloquent espousal of the BJP concepts of nationalism and secularism should be music to the ears of the party top brass. Among other things, he believes Muslims need to be wary of hardliners and confrontationists within the community instead of harbouring misgiving about Hindutva.

"Hindutva imbibes the finest Indian traditions of liberalism and humanism and secularism will survive only till the spirit of Hindutva exists. So Muslims have a stake in the longevity of Hindutva", argues the emerging *minority* face of the BJP. He insists the Muslims at large will swear by this position some day.

22. J.K. Hindu exiles eulogise Thackeray

by Sujata Anandan

Indian Express
New Delhi, 25 September 1996

MUMBAI, Sept. 24: As the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) attempts to shrug off the Shiv Sena, which in recent days has become an albatross round its neck, it might find that it is losing ground to its ally where matters relating to the Hindu heart are concerned.

The BJP's dilly-dallying over hardcore Hindutva issues has already earned it the ridicule of the extreme right of the Hindu fundamentalist forces. With the Sena all set to dent its vote bank in Uttar Pradesh, their latest support base to be plundered is that of **Kashmiri Hindus** in exile.

BJP ideologue Govindacharya's recent statements that the Sena's militancy was abhorrent and that the party had failed to grasp *the true meaning of Hindutva*, might result in the loss of support of Kashmiri Hindus in exile, who have taken exception to his description of the Sena as *incompetent and immature*.

In an extremely critical condemnation, the **Panun Kashmir**, an umbrella organisation of Kashmiris in exile, has described Govindacharya as *irresponsible and hypocritical* and accused him of practising the same *double standards that his people believe in*.

The ire arises out of Govindacharya's earlier criticism of Kashmiri Pandits. According to Anu Tikoo, the Mumbai coordinator of Panun Kashmir, "A year back, he was quoted as saying that Kashmiri Pandits have got enough and now they should try and go back to Kashmir."¹⁰²

This has got their goat. Kashmiri Pandits contrast this attitude with that of Sena supremo Bal Thackeray who, they say, has stood by them, even persuading the Maharashtra government to reserve a special quota in the state's educational institutions for Kashmiri migrants. "On a single-page petition, he took a decision within six days that settled the future of 2,000 students without much ado," says Ashok Pandit, the western India co-ordinator of Panun Kashmir.

So now they eulogise Thackeray as another avataar of the Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji and dismiss the BJP and Govindacharya as political opportunists for having gone back on every promise made to them.

¹⁰² Govindacharya should have given a lead by going to and settling down in Kashmir. Lecturing to poor Kashmiri Hindus on what they should do, comes easily to self-appointed Hindu leaders like Govindacharya who goes about with airs of a profound political strategist.

The litany of their grievances against the BJP are carefully listed but, they are most peeved at the fact that while the BJP's election manifesto clearly rooted for the abolition of Article 370, soon after Atal Behari Vajpayee was sworn in Prime Minister, he went back on this commitment stating that *the abolition of the Article was not on his governments agenda.*

"I am sure if Thackeray's government comes to power in Delhi he would take steps to remove Article 370," Tikoo said.

"So the BJP has been unable to protect the interests of Kashmiri Pandits in India. And so far as understanding issues is concerned it is the BJP which has completely failed to understand the issue of elections in Kashmir," Pandit told the Indian Express. Pandit believes Thackeray is the only politician in India who grasped the issue at stake for the Kashmiri migrants.

23. Secularism is the very colour of our blood: Vajpayee¹⁰³

Pankaj Sharma

Navabharat Times
New Delhi, 17 November 1996

JAIPUR: BJP's imminent strategy is going to be crystal clear now. Days to come would give the BJP a secular-socialist colour. BJP's top leadership at a Jaipur meeting decided that initiatives would have to be taken to bring the Muslim community close to it at all costs, that a movement would have to be launched to fight corruption at every level, that the poor's welfare oriented economic policies would have to be forcefully advocated, that a movement would have to be launched against foreign companies, and that a fight to the finish would have to be started against the forces retarding BJP's march to power.

This meeting at Jaipur seems to be a milestone in reshaping BJP's image. BJP leadership has realised that with the majority community being with it, only a certain stage of the destination could be reached; to go ahead of it BJP needs the help of backward classes and particularly the minorities' support. BJP is content with its access to the OBCs, but the apathy of the Muslim community is still pinching it. That is why Atal Behari Vajpayee announced a well calculated plan of action, at the Tripolia Chowk (Jaipur) public meeting. He requested *our Muslim brethren* to see BJP's conduct, work and behaviour and then reconsider their attitude to it. In this public meeting, Vajpayee assured the minority community: "Secularism is the very colour of our blood, it is the very smile on our lips."

Vajpayee said, "We look at our Muslim brethren not as voters but as human beings. Being from a different faith, has no meaning, what is needed is patriotism. Those who fought for Pakistan, are living a refugee's life there in Pakistan itself. It is very difficult for the Shias to survive in Pakistan. The religious freedom that is there in India, is to be found nowhere else. Therefore, Muslim brethren, come, let's enhance the glory of our country together."

Lal Krishna Advani reiterated the same entreaty on this occasion. He said, "The political parties with whom you are now, will be nowhere after some time. BJP has promised that it will give security and justice to all and there shall be no discrimination on account of religion. We shall restore harmony in the society and honesty in administration, we shall emphasise swadeshi in the economic field and guard our borders."

BJP which has so far been considered anti-Muslim, has been trying to adorn its image with the plumage of secularism (or **panth-nirpekshata** as it itself calls it). It knows that in order to make a dent into other political parties, only this nail has been missing from its tool-box. Now on, that will

¹⁰³ Translated from Hindi.

not continue. The socialist sword has been wielded by non-BJP parties so far. Now the BJP wants to wield the same to serve its own purpose. It has been shedding its old garb of being pro-American capitalism.

Atal Behari Vajpayee proclaimed on the occasion, “Not to speak of communism, our communists are not mentioning even socialism any more. But we want to tell you that the poor will be crushed by the market economy we are creating in our country. Economic policies of the last five years have ruined our land. We are passing through such a crucial phase of economic slump that the salaried people will find themselves in great misery within a few months. Market is a merciless machine. Foreign companies are concerned with their profits only. They are not coming here to help us.”

24. A Good Augury -from Letters

The Hindustan Times
New Delhi, 10 February 1997

Sir, It is heartening to note that the Bharatiya Janata Party, of late, has realised its folly of isolating Muslims. In Kerala it is organising meetings in which intellectuals of both the communities exchange their views so as to remove the misunderstandings and misconceptions between them. In these conclaves, efforts are made to cultivate and establish healthy relationship between the two communities. It has also been reported in newspapers that in a number of districts in Kerala Muslims have not only joined the BJP but have been given berth in the party's executive committees.

It is unfortunate that the party leaders speak in different ways on certain key issues. Whereas some have soft corner for Muslims, others ostracize them. For better mutual understanding it is necessary that both the communities first shed their prejudices. To be a good Hindu or a Muslim does not necessarily mean that their goodness is weighed in terms of degree of their religiosity. Perhaps, the time has come when moderates like Atal Behari Vajpayee¹⁰⁴ assert their influence in removing the mistrust between the two communities.

Yours

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¹⁰⁴ Muslims as well as *secularists* of all hues have been hailing Vajpayee as *the right man in the wrong party*. Vajpayee has always relished the compliment without caring a fig for how the remark reflects on the party he heads. Once again, it is the old story of Pandit Nehru being the only *progressive* in a *reactionary* Congress. Let there be no doubt that Vajpayee is another Nehru in the offing so far as Hindutva is concerned.

25. Muslims in Behrampada voted in a pragmatic way

by Anil Singh

The Times of India
Mumbai, 2 March 1997

MUMBAI: Simply put, it was gutter-level politics, quite literally, which helped the Shiv Sena win the civic seat from Behrampada. The Sena was the only party which got the drains cleaned and had toilets built for the women of this Muslim-dominated slum in Bandra east.

Apart from their work in the area, a host of other factors went into ensuring the Sena's victory in the slum which witnessed some of the bloodiest communal riots in December 1992-January 1993.

To begin with, the Muslim leadership in Behrampada was divided. While one group favoured the Congress, the other sided with the Sena.

The Samajwadi Party, which performed so well in other Muslim pockets, did not put up a strong candidate in Behrampada. Its candidate, Naseem Khan, polled only 1,473 votes and finished fifth among the 14 contestants.

The Congress, which is not a cadre-based party like the Sena, never recovered from the setback it suffered when its MP, Sunil Dutt, withdrew from active politics. Although Mr. Dutt is popular in Behrampada, he has stopped visiting it, according to residents.

The sitting Congress corporator, Gulzar Sheikh, is a discredited man. However, he stood as an independent and cornered 1,114 votes, finishing sixth. The Congress candidate, Nirmala Agarwal, was the sitting corporator from the adjoining ward. She was pitchforked into this ward because of the change in ward limits this time. Ms Agarwal got 2,111 votes and finished second to the Sena's Virendra Jagade who got 6,829 votes.

The Republican Party of Indian (RPI), which did not have an alliance with the Congress this time, finished third. Its candidate, Maruti Pawar, got 1,951 votes. The Janata Dal's Ahmed Kadri finished fourth with 1,507 votes.

The only other candidate who got more than 500 votes was independent candidate and a Congress rebel, Pandurang Thorat.

While the Sena benefited from its alliance with the BJP, the Congress paid a heavy price for the lack of an alliance with the RPI and rebel candidates. The low turnout in ward no. 79, about 40 per cent,

was another factor which affected the Congress.

As Behrampada accounts for nearly 20,000 of the 40,000 voters in ward no. 79, the Sena banked heavily on Muslim votes from this slum. Its workers went about wooing the Muslims meticulously under the leadership of local Sena MLA Shrikant Sarmalkar. He was a corporator from Behrampada from 1985 to 1992 and has a support base there.

Observers say that the Sena benefited from another source. Mohalla committee workers such as P. P. Jamkhedkar and Sushobha Barve and senior police officers such as Satish Sahney and Sanjay Pandey did commendable work to normalise relations after the riots. However, being apolitical, the mohalla committee took no credit for the work. The Sena built on this base and capitalised on the vacuum left by Mr. Dutt's absence.

According to informed sources, the police indirectly helped the Sena by extorting a Behrampada Muslim leader just before the polls. However, there were no complaints of rigging or bogus voting from Behrampada.

A Behrampada resident said on condition of anonymity that she voted for the Sena as the party had been helping them with their day-to-day problems. For instance, the Sena helped her get an electricity meter installed. Slumdwellers who do not have their own meters are fleeced by slumlords who provide them illegal connections.

According to Ms Barve, Behrampada residents were disoriented when outside support dried up soon after the 1992-93 riots. Several Samaritans who had come to the slum's aid withdrew after they found that the local community leaders refused to stop fighting among themselves.

Left to fend for themselves, most Behrampada residents made their peace with the Sena, which was bending over backwards to woo them. Educated Muslim youngsters were the first to accept the Sena's offer of friendship. It is from this lot that a new leadership is expected to emerge in the coming months.

However, Behrampada residents feel that the Sena tiger will not change its stripes and that its support for them is largely a tactical move.

26. Joshi sparks off row over Religion Bill

by Pranati Mehra

THE INDIAN EXPRESS
New Delhi, 9 March 1997

MUMBAI, MARCH 8 - Chief Minister Manohar Joshi's assurance to a delegation of Catholic leaders, last month, has surprised Mangalprabhat Lodha, BJP MLA from Malabar Hill.

The issue is the Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Bill, introduced by Lodha as a private member's Bill in the last Assembly session at Nagpur. The Bill seeks to make the use of force or allurement for religious conversion a cognisable offence in the State.

The Bill, which did not come up for discussion though it was introduced on December 20 last year, the last day of the session, is expected to be taken up in the forthcoming Budget session of the State Legislature, later this month.

Joshi has apparently assured the delegation, comprising Cardinal Simon Pimenta, the former Archbishop of Mumbai, Bishop Thomas Dabre and Father Denis Pereira, secretary of the Archdiocese Board of Education, that the Catholic community should not be anxious about the introduction of the Bill, since it was a private member's Bill.

An upset Lodha refuses to believe that the Chief Minister could have made such a statement. "It would amount to an infringement of a legislator's right to move a private Bill. It is likely that the Catholic leaders have misquoted Joshi," Lodha said.

Capt. Jimmy Martin, spokesman for the Archbishop, however, confirmed that the delegation, which met Joshi on January 23 this year, had, in fact, quoted the Chief Minister correctly.

"The delegation met Joshi after the incident at the Canossa High School (Shiv Sena staging protests over a teenager's conversion to a Christian sect)," Martin told this reporter.

"It was in that context that they met the Chief Minister, and the private member's Bill was mentioned. The Chief Minister did assure the community as has been quoted in newspapers," Martin confirmed.

Lodha is not convinced. "I am not going to withdraw this Bill. So, it will have to be put to vote, whether any community likes it or not. Besides, the Bill is not against religious conversion per se. I do not see how anyone can fear a move which opposes the use of fraudulent means in religious

conversion,” he said.

He said he would also consider a privilege motion against the Catholic leaders, “if they do not withdraw the Press release they have sent to the newspapers regarding the Chief Minister’s assurance”.

Despite repeated attempts, the Chief Minister was not available for comment.

If the Bill becomes an Act, then the use of force or allurement for religious conversions will become punishable with a maximum jail term of one year or fine upto Rs. 5,000, or both.

The punishment will be double if the offence is committed in respect of a minor, woman or person belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes.

Anyone performing the rites for conversion or witnessing such rites, would be obliged to inform the District Magistrate of the conversion.

The Bill has provisions for the offence to be investigated by an officer of the rank of inspector of police or above.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ The Congress Governments in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh had enacted similar Acts quite some time ago. But BJP Governments in U.P., Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi have not even given a thought to such a step. It was certainly brave on the part of a BJP MLA to defy the party veto in this context.

27. VHP drops plan to liberate Kashi, Mathura

by Moran Sahay

The Statesman
New Delhi, 29 March 1997

AYODHYA. March 28 - The Vishwa Hindu Parishad in a major policy shift has dropped its **Direct action Plan** to *liberate* Kashi and Mathura.

At the three-day in-camera proceedings of the VHP which concluded at Karsevakpuram here today, the front ranking leaders of the parishad abandoned programmes to launch movement to *liberate* the two shrines by taking possession of the **Gyanvapi Mosque** in Varanasi and the **Shahi Mosque** in Mathura which they consider encroachment upon the Lord Vishwanath Temple and Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple respectively.

Mr. Ashok Singhal, working president of the VHP confirmed today that *right now there is no programme for direct action to liberate the shrines at Kashi and Mathura.*

Mr. Singhal soon after delivering the valedictory address to a gathering of 200 delegates of the VHP drawn from different parts of the country told *The Statesman* that *our thrust as for the present is to mobilise mass support and go in for awakening drive to educate the people on the historical excesses committed on the two shrines.*¹⁰⁶

But the VHP has not abandoned its claim on the shrines at Ayodhya, Kashi or Mathura which continue to be on the agenda of the parishad. "Any decision on the shrines has to be approved by the **Dharma Sansad** comprising Sants and Shankaracharyas which is the apex body on the subject", Mr. Singhal clarified.

The VHP leaders also claimed that the parishad did not believe on calling kar sevaks in large number in future at Mathura or Kashi as it was done at Ayodhya leading to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in December 1992. For the time being the Dharma Sansad has decided against mobilising kar sevaks around Kashi and Mathura temples.

Shifting the focus from the contentious issue of the shrines the three day conclave emphasised on soft agenda which included cleansing of Ganga from pollution and renewed agitation against cow slaughter. Besides, the VHP would open front against conversion of Hindus to Islam and

¹⁰⁶ Ashok Singhal was speaking tongue-in-cheek. He was hiding the truth that the **Direct Action Plan** was dropped at the behest of the BSP which had formed a coalition Government with the BJP in U.P. a few days earlier. The VHP is no more than a pretentious plank for fooling Hindus into voting for the BJP. The rest of its blah blah about the cow, the Ganga and liberating Hindu places of worship is no more than a smokescreen.

Christianity. There is nothing new about it.

According to some delegates who refused to disclose their identity, the VHP is against precipitating any crisis that may jeopardise the prospects of the Bharatiya Janata Party which is aiming for a national acceptability.

Strategically, the VHP delegates say, the parishad would raise its own band of followers region wise strong enough to mobilise a million volunteers at any place to give effect to its programme. But this is a continuous process to unite the Hindus and to achieve the cherished goal of a government favourably disposed towards the cause of the Hindutva.

To put up a brave front Mr. Singhal said, “we are going to declare a war against all those forces who are bent upon dividing the nation”. When asked to elaborate, the VHP leader identified the onslaught of the Islamic countries and the dubious role of the United States who wanted India to disintegrate.

Nearer home the VHP would also take on the political parties and the governments whether in the States or at the Centre whom it considered hostile to the cause of the Hindutva that is nation.

The VHP’s shift in policy also indicates a joint attempt by the Sangh Parivar to *cooperate* with the new political agenda of the BJP.

28. Govt seeks revision of order on Naib Imam

by HT Correspondent

The Hindustan Times
New Delhi, 1 May 1997

NEW DELHI, April 30 - The Delhi Government filed a petition in the Delhi High Court seeking revision of a court order refusing permission to the Government to drop sedition charges against Naib Iman of Jama Masjid Syed Ahmed Bukhari.¹⁰⁷

Mr Justice J.K. Mehra issued notice to the respondents, Naib Imam Bukhari and the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate and posted the matter for hearing on May 7.

The Delhi Government counsel sought revision of the order of Metropolitan Magistrate Vinod Kumar Sharma on Jan. 14, in which he did not allow the Government to withdraw the case of sedition.

Justice Mehra remarked, "He (Naib Imam) has not appeared before the court even once. He has to show respect to the court and the law of the land."

The Naib Imam was charged with sedition for his speech at Jama Masjid on January 22, 1993 after the demolition of Babri mosque and a case was registered against him on May 14, 1993.

The counsel for the petitioner contended that the Delhi Government had decided to drop the sedition charges against the Naib Imam and as the State was the master of criminal litigations, the court did not have the jurisdiction to disallow the withdrawal of the plea.

"If the Government lacks the will to implement its decision why should the court be a party to it? All seditious and subversive activity stems from the root of State weaknesses," said the judge and added that the court had ample power to dismiss the plea for withdrawal of the case.

The counsel said that the State had decided to withdraw the case as it would not be in public interest to continue prosecution as it *would seriously affect the law and order situation in the Capital*. He added that the decision had been *based on proper assessment of the ground realities with the primary view of maintaining communal harmony between certain communities in the Capital*.

¹⁰⁷ It may be noted that the Delhi Government under reference is the BJP Government headed by Chief Minister Sahib Singh. This Government has not gone to the High Court with regard to hundreds of cases filed by the earlier Administration under the same section(s) of the Indian Penal Code against Hindu individuals and organisations. When some people requested this Government to lift the ban on Ram Swarup's book, *Understanding Islam through Hadis*, one of its MLAs remarked, "We shall not do anything which displeases the Muslims." The ban had been imposed by executive action after two screening committees appointed one after another had cleared the book as unobjectionable, and a Metropolitan Court had dismissed the case for banning it.

The court had earlier stayed non-bailable warrants issued by the trial court as it had caused considerable tension inside the walled city, said the counsel.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Obviously, Muslim mobs can bend every law of the land and make any government shake in its skin, by threatening to stage street riots. The BJP should stop mouthing the empty slogan that it stands for *justice to all and appeasement of none*.

29. BJYM's meet on June 7 by HT Correspondent

The Hindustan Times
New Delhi, 6 June 1997

NEW DELHI, June 5 - The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), the youth wing of the BJP, will organise a conference of the **Muslim youth** to mark the golden Jubilee celebrations of the independence.

Addressing a joint Press conference here today, BJYM's all India general secretary Shahnawaz Hussain and Delhi unit president Begraj Kathana, said that conference at national level will be held here on June 7. It will be presided over by Ms Uma Bharati. Prominent leaders, who will also address the conference, include Mr Sikander Bakht, MP and Mr Krishan Lal Sharma, MP.

They said that similar conferences will also be held later on at Lucknow (June 11), Calcutta (June 15) and Hyderabad (June 26).

They said that the BJYM was against the policy of appeasement. They clarified that the interests of the Muslims will be safeguarded if the BJP came to power at the Centre.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ The BJP is now out to confirm, on the 50th anniversary of the Partition, the Congress-Communist thesis that it was not the Muslims but the **Hindu communalists** who divided the country. Small wonder that Muslim should be invited by the BJP to celebrate a great triumph in the history of Islam in India.

30. Vande Mataram *dispute* at BJP Muslim meeting by Express News Service

The Indian Express
New Delhi, 8 June 1997

NEW DELHI, JUNE 7 - A MISUNDERSTANDING between firebrand BJP leader Uma Bharati and her senior Sikander Bakht over **Vande Mataram** created a flutter at the National Muslim Youth Convention organised by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha here today.

In a departure from BJP tradition, the convention did not begin with the national song, inviting Bakht's wrath. Chiding the Muslim community for what he called its well-known objections to Vande Mataram, the BJP leader told the gathering that he was *ashamed* by this.

Vande Mataram means salutation to the Motherland, he said. "Can't we salute our Motherland? Why should we be ashamed of it?" he asked.

Bharati, however, clarified later that she had scrapped the song as the president of the Morcha because no one had come prepared to sing it. "No one knew all the words or had practised the song," she said in defence of her decision. "Unfortunately, Bakhtji got the wrong impression."¹¹⁰

Bakht told ENS that he was not upset with Bharati for her decision. "She did it out of consideration for the Muslim community. I am upset that Muslims feel this way about the song. Why should this feeling be there at all?" he said.

¹¹⁰ Uma Bharati has perfected the art of lying with a straight face. Hindus should beware of double-faced firebrands like her. She is quite capable of spitting venom against Hindus and Hinduism in her usual firebrand fashion if her claim as an OBC leader, or as a warrior for woman's rights, or even as a spokesperson for the dalits is not conceded in due course.

APPENDIX I: Maulana Wahiduddin Khan vis-à-vis National Integration

The Tabligh Movement Millions of Bearded Militants on the March by *Sita Ram Goel*

The Sarva Panth Samādar Manch is supposed to work for national integration. One wonders, however, if Dattopant Thengdi or any other stalwart of the Sangh Parivar cared to find out who Maulana Wahiduddin Khan was and what he stood for before they invited him to *sanctify* the Samadhi of Dr. Hedgewar by his *august* presence.

“Maulana Wahiduddin, currently the director of the Islamic Center, Delhi, resigned from a prominent position in the Jammat-i-Islami of India in 1960.”¹¹¹ We shall take up the Jamaat-i-Islami at a later stage in this chapter. We have to take up the Tablighi Jammat first because it prepares the ground for the Jamaat-i-Islami or in other words the Jamaat-i-Islami takes over from where the Tablighi Jamaat leaves.

“The Tablighi Jamaat of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent constitutes one of the very few grass roots Islamic movements in the contemporary Muslim world. In 1926, the Jamaat began da’wa work in the limited confines of Mewat near Delhi and consisted of a few dozen disciples of **Maulana Mohammad Ilyas** (1885-1944). Today the movement claims to have millions throughout the Muslim world and the West. Its 1988 annual conference in Raiwind near Lahore, Pakistan, was attended by more than one million Muslims from over ninety countries of the world. The Raiwind International Conference of the Tablighi Jamaat has now become the second-largest congregation of the Muslim world after hajj.”¹¹²

“It was because of his dissatisfaction with the madrasas that Maulana Ilyas resigned from a prestigious teaching position at Mazaharul Uloom Seminary in Saharanpur (Uttar Pradesh) and came to **Basti Nizamuddin** in the old quarter of Delhi to begin his missionary work. The Tabligh movement was formally launched from this place in 1926. Basti Nizamuddin later became the movement’s international headquarters.”¹¹³ Ilyas had returned from his second hajj in 1925 when he formalized the movement he had started earlier.¹¹⁴ “Jama’ats come to the *markaz* [at Nizamuddin]

¹¹¹ *Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia*, by Mumtaz Ahmad in *Fundamentalisms Observed* edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, Chicago, 1991, p. 529, ftn. 125.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 510.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 512.

¹¹⁴ Shail Mayaram, *Resisting Regimes: Myth, Memory and the Shaping of a Muslim Identity*, OUP, Delhi, 1997, p.225. It may be remembered that the Wahabi movement of Syed Ahmad Barelvi (1786-1831) and the Faraizi movement of Shariatullah (1790-1831) and his son Mohammad Mohsin or Dudhu Mian (1819-1860) were also launched after each of them came back from hajj which was sometimes prolonged for a stay of several years in Mecca and Medina. (See Sita Ram Goel, *Muslim Separatism: Causes and Consequences*, Enlarged Reprint, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 59-63).

from all over [the world]; ten years ago a five storey building was erected to accommodate foreign jama'ats.”¹¹⁵

The first great achievement of the Tablighi Jamaat was the cold-blooded murder of Swami Shraddhananda. The swami had been lionized by Muslims when he supported the Khilafat agitation during the first Non-Cooperation movement (1921-22). “But as he was closely associated with the **Shuddhi movement** a section of Muslims cherished bitter hatred against him. On 23 December 1926, when the Swami after a serious attack of pneumonia was lying in his bed, a Muslim entered into his room on false pretext and stabbed him with a dagger.”¹¹⁶ It became well known very soon that the murderer had been hired by the Tablighi Jamaat headquartered at Nizamuddin.

Its latest triumph is recorded by Shail Mayaram in her book on Mewat published in 1997. “Around the corner from Basti Nizamuddin is the Masjid Panjpiran, now one of the centers of decision-making for Mewat. Maulvis, politicians, and chaudharis assemble here to discuss critical issues such as the outcome of December 1992 violence in Mewat. There is a growing currency of the word **kafir** with respect to non-Muslims. A Deobandi alim in Punhana told me in the context of attacks on temples in December 1992 (in retaliation to the demolition of the Babri mosque) that this was an example of the age-old conflict between kufr (unbelief) and eternal Islam. A report on the rioting in Mewat that followed suggests the role of some maulvis in the organization of protest and later damage to temples, in five places. Some Meos explained the mobs, largely comprising young persons, in terms of the ‘**Otherness of the Hindu**’ which had been brought about by the work of religious reform.”¹¹⁷

The *work of religious reform* referred to in the above citation means, of course, the work of the Tablighi Jamaat. Wahiduddin Khan has narrated with overbrimming enthusiasm the story of how the ‘*Otherness of the Hindu*’ was *brought about* in Mewat. We have to quote him at some length:

- ★ “This great movement generally known as the Tablighi Jama’at has inspired a new fervour, a new zeal to serve the divine cause. Its founder surprisingly was a slight, short-statured individual rather unimpressive in personality. It was this extraordinary figure known as Maulana Ilyas who founded the Tablighi Jama’at which was to inspire in thousands of people a religious zeal which had been unknown for centuries.”¹¹⁸
- ★ “This family traced its descent to the Valliullah family, who had been chosen to by God to rectify the distorted picture of Islam which had resulted from the Taimur family’s wrong attitude to towards religion”.¹¹⁹
- ★ “His [Ilays] father had set up a small religious school [Madrasah] at Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin to impart free education to poor students. It was at this place that he [Ilyas] first

¹¹⁵ *Remaking Ourselves: Islamic Self-Fashioning in a Global Movement of Spiritual Renewal*, by Barbara D. Metcalf in Accounting for Fundamentalisms edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, Chicago, 1994, p.720.

¹¹⁶ R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The History And Culture of the Indian People*, Volume XI, Struggle For Freedom, Second Edition, Bombay, 1978, pp. 435-36.

¹¹⁷ Shail Mayaram, op. cit., p. 245.

¹¹⁸ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, *Tabligh Movement*, Al Risala Books, The Islamic Centre, Nizamuddin, New Delhi, Second Reprint, 1994, p.5. First published in Urdu in 1986, it was translated and published in English the same year. It is announced at the back of the title page: “No permission is required from the publisher for translation of the book and publication of the translation in any language. On application, permission will also be given to reprint the book for free distribution etc.” So the Maulana has not had to bother about further reprints.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 6. Valliullah or Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1703-62) was the famous alim and Sufi who had invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India, slaughter Hindus in general and Marathas and Jats in particular, and restore Muslim rule in India. See *Muslim Separatism*, op. cit., pp. 51-56. “Taimur family’s wrong attitude towards religion” refers to the policy initiated by Akbar for making small concessions to Hindus in order to consolidate the Mughal Empire in India.

came into contact with the Mewatis. Distressed by their religious and spiritual poverty, he set himself to reform their condition through religious education.”¹²⁰

- ★ “These uncouth and illiterate people had converted to Islam on a mass scale as a result of the efforts of the well-known Sufi Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia and his descendants, but in practical life they were far from Islam. They kept their Hindu names, like Nahar Singh and Bhup Singh; they left a lock of hair [chōtī] on top of the shaven head as Hindus do; they worshipped idols, celebrated all the Hindu festivals and made sacrifices to the pre-Islamic gods and goddesses. They could not even recite the creed of the Muslims [kalimah]. So unfamiliar even was the sight of prayer [namaz], let alone of the saying of it, that if by chance they came across someone praying, they gathered to enjoy the spectacle, assuming that the person must either be mad or suffering from some ailment due to which he was kneeling and prostrating himself again and again. Major Piolet, the Bandobast officer of Alwar at the end of the 19th century writes, “Meo are half-Hindu in their habits and customs”. ”¹²¹
- ★ “In 1921 new problems arose when Arya Samaj preachers resolved to reconvert the Indian Muslim to their ancestral religion. Thanks to the religious and cultural poverty of the Meos, the large-scale activities of the Aryan missionaries met with great success. The solution of this problem was to impart to them religious education so that they did not yield to any **malign influence**. ”¹²²
- ★ “When it came to convincing the Mewatis that they should send their children to school, they were tough nuts to crack. They ultimately surrendered before his indomitable will, and he succeeded in establishing a number of schools where besides the teaching of the Quran, elementary religious education was also imparted. Work on this pattern continued until another incident occurred which changed the course of his activities. On a visit to Mewat, the Maulana was introduced to a young man who had just completed his education in one of his schools. Much to his astonishment, he saw no traces of Islam in his clean-shaven appearance. He was quick to realize his failure. His aim had not been fulfilled. He had been aware of the problem to some extent before, but now it had become plain for all to see. The schools did serve a purpose, but to the Maulana’s eyes only a secondary one.”¹²³
- ★ “As soon as the young people left the school they mingled with company of their own sort, which nullified the school influence altogether. The only solution to this problem, as the Maulana saw it, lay in separating them from their milieu, and it was decided that they should be withdrawn from it in groups for a period of time, and gathered together in mosques or religious institutions away from **bad spheres of influence**. This formula proved the right one, engaging them in religious activities round the clock for some length of time made them

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 7. Basti Nizamuddin with Nizamuddin Auliya’s (1238-1325) tomb at its centre has been a great centre for organizing jiḥād since the days of Sultan Balban (1266-86). Chishtiyya sufis trained at this place fanned out to all parts of India, and invited as well as guided Muslim armies to invade Hindu Kingdoms everywhere. Some of the famous Sufi dargahs in the North and the South stand on spots where these sufis settled down after destroying Hindu temples. Those sufis who actually participated in wars and got killed are known as shahīds. This place continues to be the greatest centre of Islamic Fundamentalism today. Muslim infiltrators from Bangladesh are helped from here.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 7-8. The Maulana does not mention that brutal force had been used by Balban, the Khaljis and the Tughlaqs to drag the brave Mewati Hindus into the fold of Islam. Nor does he mention that the Mewatis’ spontaneous reaction to namaz was the same as that of the Pagan Meccans when they saw the first converts doing this acrobatics in a valley near their city.

¹²² Ibid., pp. 8-9. Emphasis added in order to show the Maulana’s view of *Shuddhi* which the **Vishva Hindu Parishad** now names more aptly as *parāvartana*.

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 9-10. Growing a beard of the prescribed size has been the hallmark of Islam.

into new human beings. Once the trial proved effective, this pattern was to be followed in future.”¹²⁴

- ★ “Such involvement could not fail to reap dividends: large numbers of people were brought into his fold from various parts of the country to spread the message he entrusted them with. Staying day and night in a religious and spiritual atmosphere indeed worked wonders for them, for when those people returned home after having undergone the training, they were changed people, far from falling under the **bad influence of their surroundings**, they sat out to be a good influence on their environment. The Maulana had found the solution to his problem.”¹²⁵
- ★ “The whole of Mewat was transformed. *Great spiritual excitement and enthusiasm could be seen among the people at large.* Where previously, mosques had been few and far between, now mosques and religious schools came up in every settlement. They changed their way of dressing and grew beards, shaking off one by one almost all their pre-Islamic customs that they had retained after their conversion. Not only did they reform themselves but they were also inspired to spread the message of God to those who were as they had been before.”¹²⁶

Ilyas undertook many tours in Mewat after his return from his last hajj in 1938. A dislike for Hinduised garments was created and people began to dress themselves according to the specifications of the Shari’at. Bracelets got removed from the arms and rings from the ears of men.¹²⁷ The first conference of the Jamaat was held in 1941 at Basti Nizamuddin. It was attended by twenty-five thousand people.¹²⁸

Leadership of the Jamaat passed on to Muhammad Yusuf, the son of Ilyas, after the latter died in 1944. Yusuf intensified and extended the activities of the Jamaat by tours to all major cities in India and also many places abroad. An international network was established which also evoked great interest among teachers and ulama of Arabia, who began coming to Nizamuddin and Deoband, where they too addressed gatherings. A vigorous pan-India and pan-Islamic movement had been constituted.¹²⁹

Partition in 1947 landed many Meos in refugee camps at Humayun’s Tomb, Purana Qila and several other localities around Nizamuddin. Yusuf sent activists of the Tablighi Jamaat to all camps. The victims were told that their fate was the result of *azâb* (the worst possible punishment administered by God), incurred because they were not good Muslims. They were invited to turn towards God. Some months after Partition, Yusuf visited Pakistan. At a meeting organized by the Jama’at-i-Lahore, he addressed the several hundred thousand refugees from India who had gone to Pakistan, telling them that to avoid *khudrishti* (fall from Grace) they must follow the path of God, and that alone will save the Muslim world. According to Hasani, the work of Tablighi Jama’ats resulted in a

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.10. Emphasis added. *Bad spheres of influence* means an atmosphere of tolerance. *New human beings* means their brutalization into fanatics.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 11-12. Emphasis added.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.12. Emphasis added in order to convey that the people of Mewat had been pulled out of their roots, brainwashed, and turned into blood-thirsty beasts. Wahiduddin Khan conceals the fact that this whole operation was financed by the Nizam of Hyderabad and many other Muslim princes and moneybags.

¹²⁷ Shail Mayaram, op. cit., p. 226. She quotes from Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Life and Mission of Maulana Mohammad Ilyas, Lucknow, 1983, p. 40.

¹²⁸ Mumtaz Ahmad, op. cit., p. 512.

¹²⁹ Shail Mayaram, op. cit., pp. 223-24.

rise of morale among the depressed Mewatis.¹³⁰

“To the Maulana,” observes Wahiduddin Khan, “dominance on earth was subject to our leading reformed lives. And he said, *‘Follow the pattern of the Prophet. Those who neither follow the path themselves nor let others follow it, will be shattered by God as He does the shell of an egg.’*” No sooner had the people reformed themselves, through the efforts of the Prophet, then God sent His scourge upon the Romans and Persians. Those who did not capitulate before Him perished by His wrath.”¹³¹

Those who want to promote national integration with the help of Wahiduddin Khan, will do well to read his chapter on **UMMAN-NESS or Islamic Brotherhood**. It carries the **text of a speech delivered by Maulana Mohammad Yusuf three days before his death on 30 March 1965, at Rawalpindi, Pakistan.** We are quoting a few key passages:

- ★ The Prophet and his companions took great pains to establish the Ummah (the community of believers). This Ummah was established only after a great **sacrifice of the interests of family, party, nation, country, language and so on.**¹³²
- ★ Remember! **The words, my nation, my region, and my people all lead to disunity, and God disapproves of this more than anything else.**¹³³
- ★ It is incumbent upon us to remain united whatever the cost. The Prophet is reported to have said: “On the day of Judgement, a certain person would be brought before God to be judged, and although he had performed all forms of worship in the world, he would stand condemned. He would wonder what it was that he was being punished for. He would be told that it was due to such words of his as had caused friction in the Ummah that he had been brought to this state. Afterwards another person would be brought, who had worshipped God far less in comparison to the former person. But he would be amply rewarded. In astonishment he would ask; **“For which of my deeds have I been rewarded so generously.”** He would be told that on some occasion he had done something or spoken some words, which had helped to bring the community together, and that it was his good words that had brought him all the reward.”¹³⁴
- ★ The collective community of Islam should be supreme over groups or nations. The enforcement of Muslim Brotherhood is the greatest social ideal of Islam. On it was based the Prophet’s sermon on his last pilgrimage, and Islam cannot be completely realized unless this ideal is achieved.¹³⁵

Patrons of Wahiduddin Khan in the Sangh Parivar should also note the thrill which the Maulana experienced when he first reached Basti Nizamuddin to join the Tablighi Jamaat:

- ★ It was August 14, 1966. At 10 O’clock in the morning we arrived at our destination - Bangla Wali Masjid situated near the tomb of Nizamuddin Aulia. This mosque has been famous as the center of reform movement for decades. Today, it has become the center of a world movement. We can liken this center to the heart. Just as the blood circulates from the heart

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 227. Thus the criminals who had brought about the Partition and were responsible of holocaust for both Hindus and Muslims, came out in the new garb of saviours!

¹³¹ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 45-46. Emphasis added.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 47. Emphasis added.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 48.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

throughout the body, then returns to the same place, so do the people going out from this place come back to it to recharge themselves spiritually so that they may continue their journey onwards with renewed vigor.¹³⁶

- ★ The Chief (Emir) prayed, to which others said Amen. After the prayer, the dispatching of missionary groups was attended to. The names of those who were undertaking the journey were called out one by one, and each in turn came up to the chief to shake hands with him and receive his blessing before he departed. **Such a poignant scene evoked memories of the Prophet sitting in the Masjid-i-Nabawi, exhorting people and sending them in groups to propagate the message to those who were ignorant.**¹³⁷

Those who have not read the orthodox biographies of the Prophet will not suspect how despicably dishonest Wahiduddin can be. The Prophet is not known to have sent a single group of missionaries believing in methods of peaceful persuasion. What he had sent instead were military expeditions forcing one Arab tribe after another to embrace Islam at the point of the sword. Those who offered resistance were massacred, their properties were plundered, and their women and children were captured for being sold as slaves. Circumstances have changed but the intention remains the same. The Tabligh movement's main aim is to prepare Muslims everywhere for taking up arms when the moment is ripe.

*According to Metcalf, the model of early Muslim jihad is implicit. The **amir** suggests military / political leadership rather than an intellectual or spiritual one, and the tours of the jama'at are called **gasht (patrols)**.*¹³⁸

We are often told by spokesmen of the Sangh Parivar that they are not opposed to Islam as such but to Islamic Fundamentalism. We do not accept the distinction because Islam by its very nature is Fundamentalist. But even if a distinction can be drawn, we wonder why they refuse to read what Wahiduddin Khan has himself written in so many words, and identify him as an Islamic Fundamentalist *sui generis*. His mild manners and pretended humility should deceive no one. In fact, he is far more vicious than the traditional or conservative Islamic Fundamentalist. The traditional Islamic Fundamentalist is never dishonest in his presentation of his faith. He never tries the tricks which modernist Muslim apologists like Rafiq Zakaria or Ashghar Ali Engineer have learnt from the Christian missionaries in order to conceal the real face of Islam. But Wahiduddin has gone a step further. He has evolved a double-speak - one for his die-hard co-religionists, and another for his Hindu dupes like K.R. Malkani, Nana Deshmukh, and Dattopant Thengdi. He is thus a doubly distilled poison.

II

Hitherto we have dealt with the Tablighi Jamaat as it grew after its foundation in 1926. But the Tabligh movement as such is much older. We have to go back into history and see the Muslim situation after the Mughal Empire broke down after the death of Aurangzeb (1707), and the invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the second half of the eighteenth century failed to restore Muslim rule in India.

Muslim *community* in India had remained sharply divided into two mutually exclusive segments throughout the centuries of Islamic invasions and rule over large parts of the country. On the one hand, there were the descendants of conquerors who came from outside or who identified

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp. 53-54.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 55.

¹³⁸ Shail Mayaram, op. cit., p. 250, fnt. 26, with reference to *Living Hadith in the Tablighi Jamaat*, by Barbara D. Metcalf in the Journal of Asian Studies 52 (1993), pp. 602-03.

themselves completely with the conquerors - the Arabs, the Turks, the Iranians, and the Afghans. They glorified themselves as the Ashrāf (high-born, noble) or Ahli-i-Daulat (ruling race) and Ahl-i-Sa'adat (custodians of religion). On the other hand, there were converts from among the helpless Hindus who were looked down upon by the Ashrāf and described as the Ajlāf (low-born, ignoble) and Arzāl (mean, despicable) depending upon the Hindu castes from which the converts came. The converts were treated as Ahl-i-Murād (servile people) who were expected to obey the Ahl-i-Daulat and Ahl-i-Sa'adat abjectly.

"During the medieval period," observes Professor K.S. Lal, "forcible and hurried conversions to Islam left most of the neo-Muslims half-Hindus. With his conversion to Islam the average Muslim did not change his old Hindu environment and tenor of life. The neo-Muslims' love of Hinduism was because of their attachment to their old faith and culture. High class converted Hindus sometimes went back to Hinduism and the old privileges. Such a scenario obtained throughout the country." He goes ahead and describes the state of neo-Muslims in the North-West, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Central India, Bengal, the Deccan and South India.¹³⁹

Shah Waliullah (1703-62) and his son Abdul Aziz (1746-1822) were the first to notice this situation and felt frightened that the comparatively small class of the Ashrāf was most likely to be drowned in the surrounding sea of Hindu Kafirs. Abdul Aziz had converted his father's jihād against the Marathas and Jats into a jihād against the British when he issued a fatwa that India under British rule had become a Dar al-Harb (zone of war). But jihād against the British needed manpower which the Ashrāf were not in a position to marshal on their own. They had to turn to the neo-Muslims. The neo-Muslims, however, had little interest in waging wars for Islam. They had, therefore, to be fully Islamized, that is, alienated completely from their ancestral society and culture. That is why the Tabligh movement was started. But early leaders of the movement could not achieve much because each one of them clashed with the Sikhs or the British and got killed.

Syed Ahmad Barelvī (1786-1831), a devoted disciple of Abdul Aziz, travelled to Mecca and some other Muslim countries in 1822 and met masters of Islamic lore to learn methods of *purifying Islam* in India, that is, brainwashing the neo-Muslims and turning them into full-fledged Muslim fanatics. He labelled his Tabligh as *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyyah*. But he got himself entangled in a jihād against the Sikh Kingdom in the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Kashmir, and was killed and burnt to ashes in 1831 by a Sikh battalion led by Kunwar Sher Singh.

Barelvī's disciple Mir Nasar Ali of Barasat in Bengal, better known as Titu Mir or Titu Mian, tried to purify Islam in West Bengal. But he clashed with the British very soon, and was killed by a British military unit in 1831. Many of his followers were hanged. Around the same time, Shariatullah (1790-1831) started the Faraizi Movement in East Bengal after having spent twenty years in Mecca and Medina. But he died in 1837 without achieving significant results. His son, Muhammad Mohsin better known as Dhudhu Mian (1819-1860) carried on his father's experiment. But he was caught by the British for numerous crimes committed against Hindus in the countryside and died in jail.¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile, another Tabligh movement had arisen in Haryana under the leadership of Shah Muhammad Ramzan (1769-1825). He found that the converted Rajputs and Jats were in no way different from their Hindu counterparts in culture, customs and celebration of religious festivals. Shah Muhammad Ramzan used to sojourn in areas inhabited by such converted Rajputs, dissuade them from practising Hindu rites, and persuade them to marry their cousins (real uncle's daughters

¹³⁹ K.S. Lal, *The Legacy of Muslim Rule in India*, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 310-14. The process of forcible conversions has been detailed by Professor Lal in his *Indian Muslims: Who Are They*, Voice of India, New Delhi, 1990, reprinted in 1993.

¹⁴⁰ See Sita Ram Goel, *Muslim Separatism: Causes and Consequences* (1985), Enlarged Reprint, Voice of India, 1995, pp. 57-64.

which converts persistently refused to do). They equally detested eating cow's flesh. To induce them to eat beef, he introduced new festivals like **Maryam ka Roza** and **Rot-bot**. On this day, observed on 17 Rajjab, a **pao** of roasted beef placed on fried bread was distributed amongst relatives and near and dear ones. Such endeavours ruled out the possibility of reconversion and helped in the **Islamization** of neo-Muslims.¹⁴¹ This leader of the Tabligh was killed not by the British but by some neo-Muslims who got enraged by his vituperation against their ancient ways.

The Tabligh movement had not been able to make much headway when the last jihād against the British was launched in 1857.¹⁴² The British put it down with a strong hand, and the Ashrāf stood really scared for the first time. A way out of blind alley was found for them by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who crawled before the British on behalf of his co-religionists. The Aligarh movement he started saw salvation for the Ashrāf in all-out collaboration with British imperialism. Henceforward, and till the second decade of the twentieth century, every member of the Ashrāf fraternity prayed and worked for the permanence of the British rule in India. By 1871, when Sir W.W. Hunter wrote his book, *The Indian Musalmans*, the Ashrāf had become the most obedient servants of Her Majesty, the Queen of England.

But the Ashrāf was far from being cured of its ingrained habit. Soon they felt strong enough to demand quid pro quo for their loyalty to the British. They tried to dictate British policies not only in India but also in the international field. But the British had their own compulsions. So the alliance broke down when the British annulled the Partition of Bengal in 1911 and imposed a peace treaty on Turkey in 1919 depriving the Sultan-cum-Caliph of a large part of his domain. The Ashrāf, therefore, decided to strike a deal with the Indian National Congress which had been seeking their support ever since it was founded in 1885. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi has summed up the situation as follows:

- ★ “The Muslims realized that single-handed they could achieve nothing. They had waged a lone struggle against British domination and gained a modicum of temporary success in 1857 when a fair number of Hindus had made a common cause with them. Both Afghans and Turks had impressed upon their leaders the stark necessity of gaining the cooperation of Hindus. Now was the opportunity and it had to be seized. It had been impressed upon them that the citadel of British power in Asia was India, which made all the Muslim countries vulnerable to attack and encroachment. Therefore whatever the cost involved, the British power must be dislodged from this citadel. They, like the Hindus, wanted freedom, but if the Hindus were to play false after the departure of the British, at least the Muslim countries will be able to breathe freely. The Muslims of the Subcontinent wanted to be partners in the freedom of their habitat as well as in the liberty of the rest of the Muslim world, but if the glory of Islam and the prosperity of other Muslim lands could be built only upon their own misery and deprivation, they thought the price was not too high to pay.”
- ★ The stage was, therefore, set for Hindu-Muslim cooperation and Mahatma Gandhi knowing full well the depths of the emotions that surged in Muslim breasts and swayed Muslim minds, was too shrewd a politician to let such an opportunity go. Muslim sentiments and

¹⁴¹ K.S. Lal, *The Legacy of Muslim Rule in India*, op. cit., p.316. It speaks volumes of Wahiduddin Khan's honesty that he conceals this core ceremony of Tabligh, namely, making neo-Muslims eat beef and marry their first cousins.

¹⁴² This jihād which was joined by Hindu rebellions on the fringes was named as *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* (London, 1909) by V.D. Savarkar. He had yet to learn the history of Islam in India. It is significant that secularists and Muslims, who hate Savarkar, hail the book as well as its name.

energies could be roped in for the deliverance of India for little to be given in return. The bargain was therefore struck.¹⁴³

We do not want to go into the story of who had to suffer **misery and deprivation**, and who had the last laugh. What we wish point out here is that the Tabligh movement was revitalized by the Khilafat agitation led by the Ashraf in India:

- ★ The beneficiary of the Khilafat movement was not only Mr. Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. **Maulana Maududi**, Allama Inayatullah Mashriqi (the founder of the Khaksar movement), and Maulana Ilyas (the founder of the Tablighi Jamaat) also benefited from the emotionally charged religious environment of Indian Islam in the late 1920s. The emergence of these new movements unleashed religious and political forces that had the combined effect of directing the Muslim position on a parallel course vis-à-vis Hindus and dividing the two religious communities - a division which ultimately culminated in the creation of the Muslim state of Pakistan.¹⁴⁴ Although Maulana Ilyas kept himself completely aloof from politics, he never opposed Islamic groups actively engaged in politics. Maulana Ilyas was of the view that the Tabligh movement and politically oriented Islamic groups although operating in different spheres, were complimenting each other's work. Hence there should be no competition and rivalry among them.¹⁴⁵
- ★ Since the beginning of Muslim rule in India, the ulama had remained permanently allied to an elite north Indian Muslim culture, hence the orthodox forms of Islam had not penetrated deep into the daily lives of the Muslim masses, who continued to cherish the customs and practices they had inherited from their Hindu past. Since the nineteenth century Mujahideen movement of Sayyid Alimad Shaheed (1786-1831) and the Faraizi movement of Haji Shariatullah, the Tabligh movement is the most important attempt to bridge the gap between orthodox Islam and the popular syncretic religious practices that are prevalent among the Muslim masses.¹⁴⁶

Mumtaz Ahmad has failed to mention the most important beneficiary of the Khilafat agitation, namely, the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind which really fathered the Tabligh-i-Jamaat and which still supplies most of its leaders to the latter. The Jamiat can also take credit for Islamicizing the Indian National Congress in cooperation with the Communists and Socialists of all sorts led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi during the pre- as well as the post-independence period. It remains lodged in the heart of the Indian Republic like a cancer.

- ★ The ulama and the Khilafatists were significant components of the Jamiat-ul-ulama-i-Hind, or the Association of Indian Ulama founded in 1919. The Jamiat was responsible for the Unanimous Fatwa of the Indian Ulama (1920), sanctioning Muslim participation in favour of the Non-Cooperation movement. It resulted in the predominance of Muslims in the Congress movement in U.P.¹⁴⁷
- ★ The breakdown of the Khilafat alliance launched a new phase of conflictual communal politics. Tabligh was begun by Khwaja Hasan Nizami, Sajjada Nashin of the Nizamuddin Dargah, M. Abdul Bari, and was actively assisted by the Jamiat. By mid July 1923 Tabligh had become such a large project that a closed door session of the Jamiat decided to establish the

¹⁴³ Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *Ulema In Politics* (Karachi, 1972), First Reprinted in India, Delhi, 1985, pp. 259-60. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁴ Mumtaz Ahmad, op. cit., p. 511.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 521.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 524.

¹⁴⁷ Shail Mayaram, op. cit., p. 235.

Jamiat-i-Tabligh-ul-Islam, a subordinate and financially independent organization to be devoted exclusively to missionary activity.¹⁴⁸

All these Muslim leaders - **Maududi, Mashriqi, Ilyas and founders of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind** - came to be known as **nationalist Muslims** during the Freedom Movement simply because they were opposed to the Muslim League's demand for Partition. Nobody cared to find out the real reason for their opposition to the League, namely, that they wanted the whole of India and not only a part of it as Dar al-Islam. None of them ever believed that kufr and Islam could ever co-exist peacefully.

The Khaksars of Mashriqi have disappeared from the scene. Ilyas lived to found the Tablighi Jamaat which is still centered round his family at Nizamuddin. The Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind has continued to function in post-independence India, and grown from strength to strength. It is only Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-i-Islami in 1941, who left for Pakistan after Partition. But that has not prevented his Jamaat-i-Islami from cooperating with the Tablighi Jamaat in India as all over the world.

Maududi (1903-1979) like Mashriqi had come to believe that Islam in India should work out a strategy which had placed the Communists, Fascists and Nazis in power - the strategy of a mailed fist wielded by a determined minority. But unfortunately for him, the British decided to divide India and quit before he could mobilize the requisite manpower and assemble the arsenal needed. He moved his headquarters to Lahore in 1948 and his Jamaat scored its first major victory in March 1949 when the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan passed the Objectives Resolutions proclaiming that country as an Islamic State. But the Jamaat-i-Islami which he left in India is equally vigorous in defending secularism as a *blessing* and as a *guarantee for a safe future for Islam in India*.¹⁴⁹

The work of the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tabligh-i-Jamaat is being coordinated by the Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, presided over at present by Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi popularly know as Ali Mian.

- ★ Associated with both M. Maududi and the Tablighi Jamaat, he has been concerned with protecting the Muslim way of life through Dini Talim Council.¹⁵⁰
- ★ Nadwi stated in an address at Jeddah (Saudi Arabia): "I am one of those who believe that a religious order cannot be established unless religion comes to wield political power and the system of government is based on Islamic foundations." He states that Hindu civilization, like the Greek, Roman and pre-Islamic civilizations, is (sic) "no better than ancient monuments" that have exhausted their potentialities. Only Islam can contribute to making India the leader of all nations from Istanbul to Jakarta, and of the continents of Asia and Africa. Elsewhere, he writes: "mankind regards the Muslim world as the deliverer and the Muslim world, in turn, looks up to the Arab world for leadership, to countries as Saudi Arabia who are the **custodians of Islam**".¹⁵¹

The Tablighi Jamaat is busy world wide in recruiting soldiers for Islamic jihād. The merit one earns by working for Tabligh is enormous.

- ★ *Calculations about benefits from righteous acts can only be called arithmetical. The concrete faza'il, or merits for prayer, for example, is astronomically inflated depending upon where one is: one must perform the*

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 235-36. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁹ Mumtaz Ahmad, op. cit., p. 479 and p. 505.

¹⁵⁰ Shail Mayaram, op. cit., p. 241.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 241-42.

canonical prayer, but in a mosque its value is enhanced 27 times, in Mecca 50,000 times; 100,000 times in the path of God, that is, on a jihad including Tabligh mission, 490,000,000!!¹⁵²

And Islamic jihād like Tabligh is now world wide because the whole world except some pockets where the Shari'a prevails, has become a vast spread of jāhiliyya.

- ★ To hasten the return of Islam requires the defeat of jahiliyya. Modern means of violence are clearly technological tools: to practice jihad, interpreted as armed struggle against jahiliyya, the most effective weaponry available provides the means. Adel Hammuda summarizes the story of al-Jihad as **Bombs and Holy Books** (Qanabil wa masahif). In Hasan al-Banna's legacy is the call **from the Holy Book to dynamite** (mina al-mishaf ila al-dinamit) as an expression for jihad.¹⁵³

Wahiduddin Khan spells out the meaning of Tabligh when he writes:

- ★ *Sometimes it becomes urgent to make peace, as at Hudaibiyya, and sometimes defence is urgently called for, as at Badr and Hunain.*¹⁵⁴

We cannot expect leaders of the Sangh Parivar to read a biography of the Prophet, and find out what Hudaibiyya, Badr and Hunain stand for and what *peace* and *defence* mean in the language of Islam. They are bent upon repeating Mahatma Gandhi who refused to read the Dogmatics and Polemics of Islam and claimed to know the *noble faith of Islam* better than those who had studied this doctrine and its history from its primary sources. He harboured a life-long illusion that the Maulanas of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind would help him in bringing the Muslim masses into the national mainstream. They helped him all right and to the hilt, but only in stamping out even the least little voice of resistance to naked Muslim aggression. He ended by becoming the **Father of Pakistan**, and a *shahid* in the service of *sarva-dharma-samabhāva*. We harbour not the shadow of a doubt that the Sarva Panth Samādar Manch is pushing on the same path whatever has survived of Hindu society and culture in the shrunken and shrinking Hindu homeland.

¹⁵² Barbara D. Metcalf, op. cit., p. 718. Emphasis added.

¹⁵³ *The Worldview of Sunni Arab Fundamentalists: Attitudes toward Modern Science and Technology*, by Bassam Tibi in *Fundamentalisms and Society*, Chicago, 1993, p. 91.

¹⁵⁴ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, op. cit., p. 67.